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Environmental Gentrification and Development in a Rural Appalachian Community: Blending Critical Theory and Ethnography

Rhiannon A. Leebrick
University of Tennessee - Knoxville, rleebric@vols.utk.edu

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I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Rhiannon A. Leebrick entitled "Environmental Gentrification and Development in a Rural Appalachian Community: Blending Critical Theory and Ethnography." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Sociology.

Harry F. Dahms, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

Sherry Cable, Paul K. Gellert, Derek Alderman, F. Scott Frey

Accepted for the Council:
Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

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“Because the lives and the collective life of particular places carry in them history and the global issues of the time, family stories and local histories make clear that these tendencies are part of the very fabric of the varied American cultures, traceable in American history from its beginnings, shaping who we are and how we think both of ourselves and of the practice of citizenship. However, these changes and processes acquired intensity and new force in the twentieth century, particularly in the decades after 1945. In these years, one among the many tensions for Americans became on one hand commitment or connection to place. On the other hand, there is the expectation that to move ahead, to fulfill one’s destiny, to continue to lay claim to an idealized American Dream, one must always be willing to move on to claim the opportunities America is believed to offer.”

Talmage Stanley,
from *The Poco Field: An American Story of Place* (2012)

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Maebel, you are the coolest Jedi I know. Thanks for your patience, unwavering enthusiasm, and lessons on focusing.

Abstract

The purpose of this dissertation is twofold: first, to explore the relevance of environmental gentrification, a concept largely applied to urban settings, as a means to understand social change in rural and small town Appalachia; and secondly, drawing upon political economy perspectives within environmental sociology and the tradition of early Frankfurt School critical theory, to contextualize the process of environmental gentrification within global capitalism. Conflicts over green economic development, including the maintenance of idyllic vistas, appear to have arisen among various groups with opposing interests and perceptions. These conflicts are complex, affected by the rise of gentrification accompanying uneven development and tied to global economic trends. Implicit in seemingly local conflicts over community planning, as new places are selectively layered onto existing places, are issues of environmental privilege, class prejudice, maintenance of ideology, and production of (socio) nature. Examining this layering of place illustrates the intricacies of political participation, governance, and economic development agendas in rural communities where environmental gentrification occurs. The findings of this study suggest that affluent newcomers act as developers and use their social capital, networks, and activist roots to effect community change. Employing the frame of early critical theory, my goal is to develop a sense of the ways in which localized community development agendas are restricted by the permeating effects of the *logic of capital* and, as a result, linked to the process of globalization. In other words, although gentrifiers' narratives suggest that they are creating a sustainable version of development, study findings suggest that these alternatives are severely limited given the homogenizing effects of capitalism, on physical space and on ideology.

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List of Abbreviations

ACA Alliance for Community Action
CBO Community-building Organization
CCC Civilian Conservation Corps
CFC Collaboration for Cadensview
CFLT Cadensview Falling Leaf Tour
CFPC Citizens for Positive Change
EIG Ecological Interest Group
PSI Protecting Space Initiative

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I finish a delicious salad made from locally sourced organic greens, heirloom tomatoes, and goat cheese. There is house-made kombucha, a trendy drink made from fermented tea, on tap. From my table inside of the restaurant and art gallery where I am seated, I see a beautiful view of the mountains. Lush green hills are set against blue ridges, and in the distance gentle peaks rise against the pink and orange sunset. Locally made pottery, batik work, hand-woven scarves and shawls, jewelry, wooden bowls, and assorted paintings and other artwork are scattered throughout the room. Next to my table is a shelf with a wooden cowboy hat, a series of intricate and colorful butter dishes, and a small cast-iron figurine of a human-like rabbit. This place feels hip. If not for the view, I might forget that I am in a small town on the eastern edge of the Blue Ridge Mountains of South Central Appalachia and not in Brooklyn, Austin, or San Francisco.

Claudia, the woman that I just interviewed, pushes her chair back and fiddles with her cellphone for a moment. [1] She is an artist, but also a longtime political and environmental activist and retired community organizer who moved here from the Northeast. Our conversation was interrupted multiple times by Claudia's phone; she answers and waves her hand apologetically at me. She

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[1] Names and other identifying characteristics including specific place names have been changed for this study.

serves on two community planning boards, is part owner of a local gallery, runs workshops on making pottery, hosts frequent fundraising events at her home, and travels regularly. Claudia moved to the area a few years ago to live in the vacation home that she and her husband built in the 1990s. When I asked her about their decision to relocate, she replied, “It’s important, being in a community where people really do care about where their food comes from. They care about our water. People care about our air. This is a community where people get it.”

Claudia invited me to her home and a few weeks later I arrived for a tour and lunch. I entered the security code for the front gate, which opened to reveal a very large house settled into a pristinely manicured hillside. From the wraparound porch there are sweeping views of the mountains, a cottage-style wild flower garden, and the guesthouse, which is about the size of a two-bedroom Cape Cod bungalow. We sat at the large table in the dining room, and Claudia’s husband joined us to eat another delicious and locally sourced meal and enjoy the lovely view. Lunch was refreshing, and touring the house was like visiting a museum with furniture, rugs, and artwork collected from around the world.

Claudia, like other affluent newcomers to this area that I interviewed, is excited to bring her activism, organizing skills, and financial support to the community. Over lunch we discussed her involvement in development projects such as the new community-building organization (CBO) of which she is a trustee, the revitalization project to which she is a financial contributor, and her grant writing. Her husband, Ben, chimed in, “For so long, Claudia and I both were

involved with national organizations and trying to cause different kinds of change in the community, or in the country, or a particular setting. It was so frustrating because you could never, ever see the impact of what you were doing in a direct way. At a much smaller scale like here...we contribute a little bit of money and it goes a long way." He listed several of the development projects to which they have ties and their hopes for the community. They are both deeply concerned about environmental issues, especially climate change and the ill-effects of industrial agriculture, and have played roles as financial contributors and behind-the-scenes planners in the community, specifically through their involvement in organizations designed to preserve and promote environmental causes such as conservation projects, sustainable agriculture initiatives, and small, locally owned businesses.

When leaving their house, I took the winding gravel road for the twenty-five minute drive to the small town where I was staying. The tops of the ridges with the best views of the mountains seemed to have the nicest homes, like the one I left. Down into the valley, the homes became less ornate and more ordinary, with several mobile homes, modest brink ranches, and the clapboard farmhouses common to the area. Although this community has a growing number of affluent newcomers like Claudia and Ben, it is also has extreme poverty long-associated with the Appalachian region. The county, like its neighbors in the mountainous region of the state, ranks below the state poverty level.

In the past two decades there has been an influx of affluent newcomers to this community. Claudia and Ben, like others I interviewed for this project, suggested that they were initially charmed by romantic interpretations of rural life and Appalachian culture – often glamorized as intrinsically *green* – and this drew them to the area. They also came intending to be directly involved in development projects that would create an environmentally and economically sustainable community. Since many of these newcomers have jobs that allow them to work from home via telecommuting or other remote means, they have the freedom to live a rural lifestyle while relying on an upper-middle class income.

Affluent newcomers bring the money and social capital necessary to alter community practices and property relations in this region. Increasingly, it appears that the push for green development is led by CBOs whose members are predominately newcomers such as remote workers, second-home owners, and retirees; this demographic helps create tourism boards, planning commissions, and economic development committees to influence cash-strapped local governments or raise private money for renewal projects. The participants in this study loosely defined green development as revitalization projects that are environmentally and economically sustainable. These prosperous new residents also participate in the community as owners of businesses such as art galleries, music venues, restaurants, bars, organic farms, and shops specializing in a variety of products like locally-made wine and beer, yarn, value-added food products like coffee, jams, and sauerkraut, handmade crafts, and clothing. This

research project examines the process of environmental and rural gentrification and the related social changes in local institutions, organizations, and governance in a rural Appalachian community.

Environmental Gentrification

Critical studies of environmental gentrification have highlighted the unintended consequences of developing green space and protecting environmental features that may make those spaces unaffordable or inaccessible for low-income or other stratified groups. Wolch, Byrne, and Newell (2014) suggested “greening projects can set off rounds of gentrification, dramatically altering housing opportunities and the commercial/retail infrastructure that supports lower income communities” (p. 239). Scholarly work on environmental gentrification can be traced to the larger body of literature on environmental justice (Dooling 2009; Gould and Lewis 2012).

Environmental justice work traditionally has focused on poor and minority communities that are disproportionately exposed to toxic waste and environmental risk (Bell 2013; Bullard 1990; 1993; 1994; 2007; Bryant 1995; Cable and Cable 1995; Cole and Foster 2001; Gould and Lewis 2012; Hurley 1995; Pellow and Bruelle 2005; Pellow 2002; Shrader-Frechetter 2002). In the 1970s, discourse about environmental injustice in communities emerged as a branch of the environmental movement. Two groups of activists loosely coalesced to form the environmental justice movement. First, under the banner of

fighting against environmental racism, grassroots activists argued that hazardous waste facilities were more likely to be built in minority neighborhoods. Community activists were inspired by the Warren County, North Carolina incident in the 1970s during which a polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) landfill was proposed to be located in a predominately African-American community. Activism at this site linked together the civil rights movement and environmentalism (Bullard 2007). Second, activists from working class and poor white neighborhoods fought against the location of toxic facilities near their homes in an undertaking that became the anti-toxics movement, spurred by the well-publicized events of Love Canal 1978, Three Mile Island 1979, and Valley of the Drums 1980 (Sze and London 2008). Environmental justice activism gained attention from the academic community in the 1980s, and soon scholars, many of who were directly involved in the movement itself, initiated research projects investigating all aspects of environmental social action. Environmental justice research continues to focus on the intricacies of environmental injustices, specifically the intersections between class, race, and gender in the United States and globally.

Growing from this well-established trajectory of environmental justice scholarship is the study of *environmental privilege* or access to environmental amenities like parks, walking or biking trails, clean air, clean water, garden spaces, and other green spaces or landscapes based on one's wealth or status (Park and Pellow 2011). Park and Pellow (2011) used Aspen, Colorado as a case study in order to examine how high-income residents maintain pristine

environments and emphasize sustainability in their development initiatives, finding that “environmental privilege results from the exercise of economic, political, and cultural power that some groups enjoy, which enables them exclusive access to coveted environmental amenities such as forests, parks, mountains, rivers, coastal property, open lands, and elite neighborhoods” (p. 4) The authors also noted that the environmentally privileged are “protected from the kinds of ecological harm that other groups are forced to contend with everyday” (2011:4). Their main focus was on environmental racism. Park and Pellow (2011) claimed that “Nativist environmentalism is a phenomenon that supports not only racial exclusion but also environmental privilege – the notion that one group should have near-exclusive enjoyment of precious ecological resources such as open space, national parks, ocean –and lakefront real estate, clean air, clean land, and clean water” (p. 14). Aspen is just one extreme example of how environmental discrimination and injustice operates through the built environment: there are many other examples of communities in which the poor live with the acute reality of pollution, while the affluent remain upstream. Recent work that looks at environmental privilege has brought more nuanced understanding to the study of inequality and environmental injustices by juxtaposing wealth and poverty and examining who has access to environmental goods, not just who is most acutely affected by environmental risks (Checker 2011; Gould and Lewis 2012; Pellow and Park 2011).

The growing body of work in environmental justice addresses the phenomenon of environmental or "green" gentrification (sometimes called: *greentrification* or *eco-gentrification*) (Banzhaf 2012; Banzhaf and McCormick 2006; Checker 2011; Dooling 2009; Gould and Lewis 2012; Smith 2002; Wolch, Byrne and Newell 2014). These works focus on urban areas where developers have implemented initiatives to provide public environmental amenities like parks, bike paths, walking trails, and green businesses in order to attract wealthier property buyers or renters (Checker 2011; Gould and Lewis 2012). An observed result of this process is the displacement of lower-income residents (Checker 2011; Dooling 2009; Gould and Lewis 2012). Narratives offered by gentrifiers highlight the ways in which environmental privilege and gentrification operate. An existing gap in the literature on environmental gentrification in the United States is an analysis of this process in a rural area.

In this project I expand upon this literature by analyzing a case of environmental gentrification in rural Appalachia. To do so I use environmental sociology to examine economic processes specifically related to the production of space and ecological detriment in the early twenty-first century. I also use early Frankfurt School critical theory perspectives to identify the socio-historical perimeters that guide not only production processes, but also the subsequent ideology of capital that permeates social life as a result.

Rural America in the Twentieth Century

During the twentieth century, rural communities in the United States changed drastically. First, de-industrialization, which began largely in the 1970s and peaked in the 1980s and 1990s, significantly altered those rural areas that were dependent on manufacturing for survival (Fitchen 1991; Flora and Flora 2004; Salamon 2003). As factories shut down, more and more workers moved away to find employment, and many of the businesses that accommodated workers eventually closed as well. Second, the mechanization of agriculture has had an enormous effect on rural areas. Because fewer and fewer households can find financial security based on farming alone, residents must seek work – increasingly in the service industry – in more urban or suburban areas; thus "once proud, self-contained, insular worlds, are being transformed into places where people only live; they work, shop, and obtain services elsewhere" (Salamon 2003:5). At the same time and as part of the same transformation, pressure from state and federal government in the 1960s through 1980s forced schools, hospitals, clinics, post-offices, and business to consolidate (Flora and Flora 2004; Salamon 2003). For example, smaller schools were closed, and students bussed to one larger, centralized school. Third, perceived notions of idyllic communities and "a robust national preference for the safe, friendly, close-to-nature, agreeably scaled, family-focused, peaceful life associated with old, agrarian, small rural towns" motivated middle-class migration to rural areas (Salamon 2003:6). In the 1970s, this phenomenon was called the "rural renaissance" and when similar trends occurred in the 1990s, scholars referred to

it as the “rural rebound” (Beal 1975; Nelson, Oberg and Nelson 2010). Scholars have also attributed these changes to white flight (Turner 1998).[2] However, rural areas in the United States have progressively become commuting zones where residents have a home, but work, shop, and participate in recreational activities in nearby cities (Salamon 2003). Fourth, the technology boom of the 1990s enabled remote workers to live in rural areas and commute virtually via the Internet if they chose to do so. Finally, among the aging population of the United States there has been a “marked propensity to migrate to rural areas” after retirement (Nelson et al. 2010:345). The shift from a manufacturing to a service economy in the United States has had a variety of repercussions on rural areas: the outmigration of long-term residents in search of employment, transformation of rural areas into communing zones, and the development of rural areas as bucolic playgrounds for those who can afford to live there. Communities in the Appalachian Mountains have experienced similar changes.

South Central Appalachia

South Central Appalachia (Figure 1) is an area on the eastern periphery of the Appalachia mountain range that covers counties in southwest Virginia, western

[2] In 2007 for the first time in world history more individuals lived in urban areas than rural areas. However, this should not dissuade scholars from researching rural places especially with regard to patterns of inequality and uneven development.

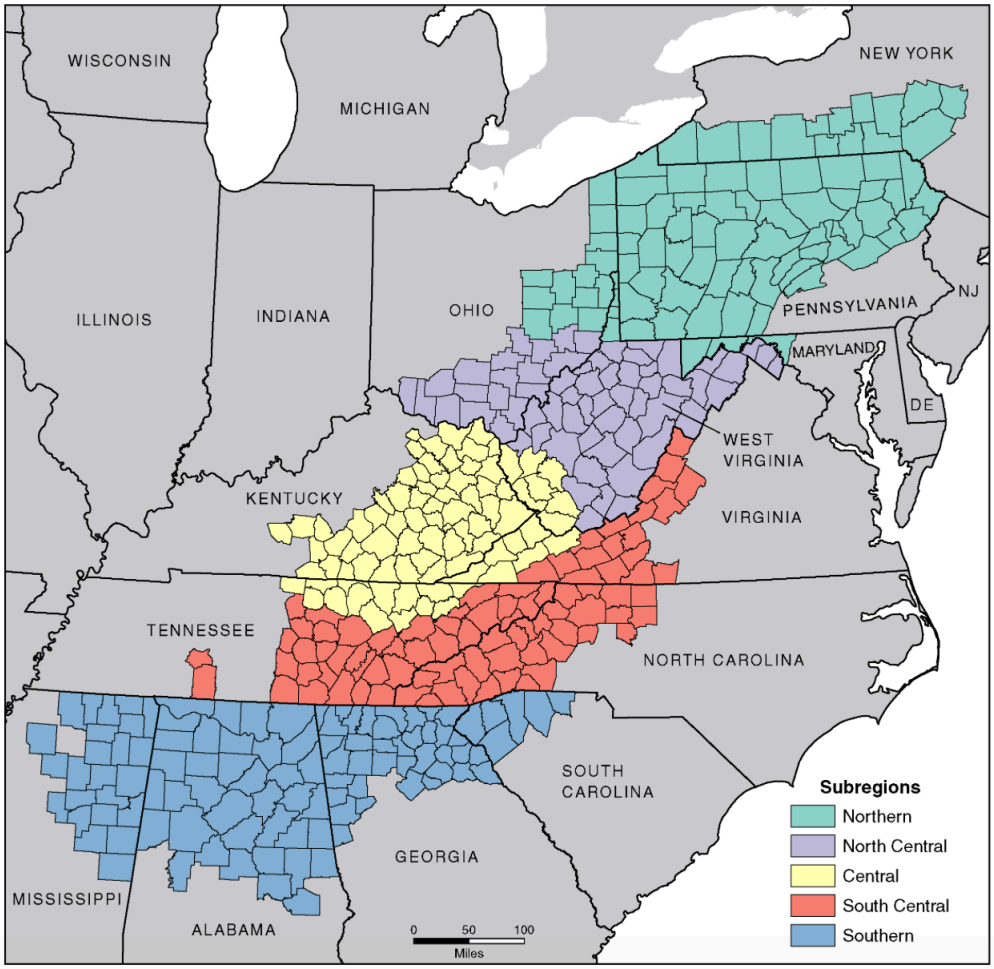

Figure 1

Map of the Appalachian Sub-regions

Courtesy of the Appalachian Regional Committee 2009

North Carolina, and eastern Tennessee (Appalachian Regional Commission 2009). Land use in South Central Appalachia was traditionally based on agriculture, timber extraction, and small-scale industrialization. Appalachia has been linked to the global economy since early European settlers first arrived, initially through the fur trade, later by timber and coal interests, and increasingly by natural gas companies. Absentee landlords owned much of the land and extracted raw materials for profit (Dunaway 1996). Consequently, capital flowed to Northern core economies leaving behind an area that in many ways fits the model of an internal periphery. In the early twentieth century, textile mills, sewing factories, and furniture manufacturing became prominent features in local economies, many having moved south seeking a source of cheap, non-unionized laborers (Shannon 2006; [1980] 2009). During this time of industrialization, small towns bustled with schools, movie theaters, restaurants, shops, gas stations, and pharmacies, among other businesses.

Because South Central Appalachia, marked by the rolling Blue Ridge Mountains and picturesque vistas, is not rich with coal seams like the ridges and valleys to the west (i.e. coal country), this area has not faced the same extreme ecological devastation that the coal counties have endured (Figure 2).[3] However, globalization and the effects of economic restructuring have significantly impacted South Central Appalachia. As factories in the United States began to

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[3] Recently several natural gas pipelines have been proposed in areas adjacent to the case site in this study.

Figure 2

View of the Blue Ridge Mountains

shut down, this region, like much of rural America, experienced a significant out-migration as residents moved elsewhere to find work. Communities were consolidated, and businesses closed in vast numbers. It also became more difficult to earn a living by farming alone as agriculture became more mechanized (Nelson et al. 2010; Shannon 2006; 2002). Although the outmigration of long-term residents has been steady because of global economic restructuring, South Central Appalachia has simultaneously attracted affluent newcomers drawn to the area by their desire to live more ecologically sustainable lifestyles and perceptions of an *authentic* place.

Culturally Appalachia is often perceived as an isolated place with its own homogenous traditions, although revisionist scholars have challenged the notions of a uniform Appalachia and instead point to a complex economic and cultural history of the region (Caudill 1962; Dunaway 1996; Eller 1982; Gaventa 1982; Shapiro 1976; Whisnant 2009)[4]. The descendants of indigenous peoples, slaves, European immigrants, and landless migrants of various ethnic, racial, and religious groups and their movement in and out of the region make for a complex and diverse cultural heritage (Dunaway 1996). However, stereotypes of overall clad, violent, proud, self-sufficient white mountain-folk persist about this region in media, pop-culture, in academia, and are also internalized by many individuals living throughout the region (Whisnant 2009).

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[4] This list includes some scholars who use the internal periphery model/colonization model to describe the Appalachian region in addition to scholars who argue against the Appalachian exceptionalism paradigm.

The Appalachian Mountains have long attracted people who want to save this place and its residents. In the early to mid 1900s religious and educational programs encouraged “the literate and self-conscious middle class” (Whisnant 2009: 9) to journey south to save the poor mountaineers. In the 1930s government programs like the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) worked to provide direct relief to residents during the Great Depression and as a source of cheap electricity. In the 1960s, the Appalachian Regional Commission was developed and policies focused on perceived notions of a *culture of poverty* (highlighted most clearly by the War on Poverty during the 1960s which used Appalachia as a poster child) and a legacy of *under-development*. Today the tradition of mission groups to the area from outside colleges and churches continues. This region also has attracted entrepreneurs and academics interested in preserving and commodifying cultural artifacts like regional music (such as traditional English folk songs), art, and crafts (Whisnant 2009).

Beginning in the 1970s and gaining momentum in the 1990s and 2000s, a growing number of affluent newcomers relocated to South Central Appalachia, particularly to the Blue Ridge Mountains (Nelson et al. 2010; Saunders 2010; Turman 2010). The Blue Ridge Mountains are more easily accessible than other parts of southern Appalachia perhaps because the presence of major highways and interstates nearby have made relocating to the region more feasible than in the more remote areas of the Appalachian mountain range. Few studies have

linked the phenomenon of environmental gentrification to this wave of newcomers. This is the story that my dissertation follows.

Dissertation Outline

The first purpose of this dissertation project is to explore the relevance of environmental gentrification, a concept largely applied to urban settings, as a means to understand social change in rural and small town Appalachia. Conflicts over green economic development, including the maintenance of idyllic vistas, appear to have arisen among various groups with opposing interests and perceptions. These conflicts are complex, affected by the rise of gentrification accompanying uneven development and are tied to global economic trends. Implicit in seemingly local conflicts over community planning as new places are selectively layered onto existing places are issues of environmental privilege, class prejudice, maintenance of ideology, and production of socio-nature. Examining this layering of place illustrates the intricacies of political participation, governance, and economic development agendas in rural communities where environmental gentrification occurs. The findings of this study suggest that affluent newcomers act as developers and use their social capital, networks, and activist roots to effect community change.

The second purpose is to develop a sense of the ways in which localized community development agendas are restricted by the permeating effects of the *logic of capital* and, as a result, linked to the process of globalization. In other

words, although gentrifiers' narratives suggest that they are creating a sustainable version of development, study findings suggest that these alternatives are severely limited given the homogenizing effects of capitalism, on space and on ideology. The current work draws upon political economy perspectives within environmental sociology in order to contextualize the process of environmental gentrification within global capitalism. I also use critical theory, particularly in the first generation Frankfurt School tradition, to provide the theoretical orientation and methodological considerations for this project. In this way, critical theory has the potential to elucidate the role of ideology and the social, economic, and cultural changes in this small Appalachian community in relation to environmental gentrification and globalization.

Chapter Two situates environmental gentrification within the broader literature on gentrification and rural gentrification and relates this process to the production of space and place and uneven development and the larger subfield of political economy of the environment. It also provides a framework of how contributions by the early Frankfurt School critical theorists can be applied to provide a theoretical and methodological lens to expand upon existing political economy theories, particularly of the environment, to study everyday life and social phenomena such as environmental gentrification.

Chapter Three outlines critical theory as method and how this theoretical orientation informs ethnographic research conducted in this study. This chapter also circumscribes the case site and presents methodological considerations.

Chapter Four analyzes the movement of in-migrants to the case site, a small, rural community in South Central Appalachia, and how these newcomers, back-to-the-landers and rural rebounders in the 1970s through 1990s, set the stage for the arrival of more affluent newcomers at the beginning of the twenty-first century and the process of environmental gentrification at my case site in South Central Appalachia, along with changes in land use, property value and rent, and perceptions about place.

Chapter Five outlines more specifically the development agendas of gentrifiers at the case site and the resulting community changes, including tensions over projects within the community such as tourism development, non-profit governance, and what some community members might characterize as the commodification of place through branding and marketing.

Chapter Six provides a summary account of the insights gained in this dissertation project.

CHAPTER II

ENVIRONMENTAL GENTRIFICATION AND THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Research of environmental gentrification comes primarily from four main disciplines: environmental sociology (Gould and Lewis 2012), anthropology (Checker 2011), geography/planning/urban studies (Curran and Hamilton 2012; Eckerd 2011; Pearsall 2010); and environmental economics (Banzhaf 2012; Banzhaf and McCormick 2006; Banzhaf and Walsh 2006; Banzhaf, Walsh, Sidon 2012). Anthropologist Checker (2011) described environmental gentrification "as ecologically minded initiatives and environmental activism in an era of advanced capitalism. Operating under the seemingly apolitical rubric of sustainability, environmental gentrification builds on the material and discursive successes of the urban environmental justice movement and appropriates them to serve high-end redevelopment that displaces low income residents" (p. 212). Environmental sociologists Gould and Lewis (2012) expand on Checker's work and use the study of environmental gentrification to problematize the concept of *just* sustainability meaning that just because something is considered sustainable does not also imply that there is adherence to any type of social justice. In my research, I found that affluent newcomers bring their activism and organizing backgrounds to the place where they relocate and that they work diligently to create an ecologically sustainable community that suits their needs, however,

there is little acknowledgement of environmental privilege, environmental inequality, or spatial segregation.

Multiple studies have shown that environmental hazards and externalized costs in the United States are distributed unevenly based on socioeconomic class and race. Environmental degradation has grown exponentially since the Industrial Revolution, and the magnitude of the problems that we face today is staggering; resource depletion, toxic waste streams, loss of biodiversity, mass extinction, and climate change are some of the more urgent challenges (Diamond 2005; Foster 1999; McKibben 2011). Lower-income neighborhoods and communities of color are disproportionately located near hazardous sites, resulting in lower property values (Anguelovski 2014; Bullard 2005; Jones and Rainey 2006; LaVelle and Feagin 2006). Poor and working class community members are often at a disadvantage within the power structure and are unable to move to areas with fewer hazards or with more environmental amenities. Moreover, they are less able to effect change due to lack of resources and political influence. Institutional racism creates even more barriers.[5] Conversely,

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[5] Despite popular and misleading assumptions that environmentalists are white and from the middle class, members of communities of color and working class and poor neighborhoods tend to care a great deal about the quality of the local environment. Jones and Rainey (2006) found that in a town near a highly polluted river in Tennessee, people of color were significantly concerned with local environmental conditions and the overall environmental quality within neighborhoods. Bohon and Humphrey (2000) found that residents of non-metropolitan communities that are experiencing economic decline oppose the placement of locally undesirable land uses (LULUs) such as landfills, incinerators, and toxic waste facilities, even when these efforts have the potential to bring economic growth. The authors found widespread public concern

wealthy neighborhoods tend to be in areas “which offer easy access to environmental amenities, or to remain in neighborhoods in which environmental amenities have been added or restored” (Gould and Lewis 2012:119). Those who are politically powerful tend to be concentrated in specific communities or neighborhoods meaning that wealth and power are, not surprisingly, relatable to space and place (Domhoff 1998; Gould and Lewis 2012).

Gentrification can lead to revitalizing or creating green spaces, and “greening” an area can lead to gentrification; in either instance the process can create or perpetuate inequality (Gould and Lewis 2012). Environmental inequality is multifaceted and includes “a lack of recognition of identity and difference between groups and individuals, a lack of attention to the social context in which unjust distribution takes place, and an unequal access to decisions-making processes...inequalities and injustices also stem from stakeholders (such as the state, community development organization, and private firms) with often contradictory and shifting interests and allegiances who struggle for access to scarce resources” (Anguelovski 2014:38). A major facet of environmental gentrification is revitalization projects meant to preserve or create environmental amenities which thus have the potential to raise property values, making it more

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about health and safety issues associated with LULUs. Even more, the authors found that proposals for LULUs in the Mid-Atlantic States have the potential to generate opposition even in places where there has been little to no opposition in the past. The authors were also unable to use include racial or ethnic variables in their work because the majority of their sample were white.

difficult for lower-income households to have equal access to these places (Harvey 1989).

Gentrification

Environmental gentrification is linked to a larger body of literature on gentrification and the range of gentrification literature is vast: macro-level studies of gentrification focus on the capitalist economy as a process of continual transformation and link local cases to global economic processes and capitalist accumulation, particularly at the production level (Harvey 1973, 1989a, 1989b, 2006; Lees, Slater, and Wyly 2008; Smith 1986; 2000; 2008). Smith (2008:294) discussed gentrification as a "reinvestment of CAPITAL…which is designed to produce space for a more affluent class of people than currently occupies that space." Place and space are constantly shaped and re-shaped by capitalism. For example, for capital accumulation to remain constant physical spaces are created, revitalized, demolished, recreated, and revitalized over and over again (Harvey 2006; Smith 1986, 2000, 2006, 2008). Smith (2008:60-61) argued that the imposition of place onto seemingly blank space (e.g. colonialism) exemplifies his theory of uneven development. Under capitalism, exchange value becomes "increasingly regulated by social forms and institutions" and with this "access to nature is unequally distributed." Similarly, Jackle and Wilson (1992: *x*) claimed that landscapes reflect human society because they serve as physical manifestations of structures and institutions: the gentrification process "benefits a

select group—newly arrived households—to the detriment of long-term residents" because "neighborhoods are systematically packaged for conspicuous consumption upgrading as the end product." Gentrification tends to occur in areas that are no longer seen as economically viable or that are perceived as economically abandoned or declining. Moreover, in urban areas the gentrification process disproportionately displaces communities of color (see DeSena 2009; Freeman 2008; Fullilove 2005; Martinez 2010).

Gentrifiers also re-locate because they seek a particular kind of life-style to consume (Rose1984); they represent—particularly in rural areas—a new professional[ized?] class with more flexible employment options, such as the ability to work from home. This is a result of changes in the industrial and occupational structure of advanced capitalist societies and results in a replacement of lower-income workers (Hamnett 1994). Ley (1980, 1994, 2003) attributed gentrification to the emergence of a post-industrial class with particular consumer habits in regard to place, which bring together artists, young professionals, self-employed workers, and those interested in a counter-culture movement. Brown-Saracino (2010) contends that gentrifiers are often aware of the impact they have on their new communities and that they play an important role in preservation, while working to minimize risks to old-timers. Regardless of their intent, gentrifiers are embedded in a larger economic system that impacts their decision and ability to relocate and thus has the potential to impact the social and cultural landscapes of the places to which they migrate. For now, in

the United States there is the tendency to think of gentrification only in urban areas, although many studies have documented this process in rural areas as well.

Rural Gentrification

Scholars have documented the trend of gentrification in rural areas of the United States, Western Europe, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand (Cloke and Little 1990; Cloke and Thrift 1987; Ghose 2004; Hines 2010a, 2010b; Yangley et al. 2005; Nelson 2001; Phillips 1993, 2002, 2004, 2005; Saunders 2010; Smith and Phillips 2001; Smith 1998, 2002; Stockdale 2010). Rural gentrification can be described as the process during which affluent urbanities or suburbanites migrate to rural areas resulting in increased property values, the displacement of lower income residents, and changes to the socio-cultural landscape. Rural gentrification stems from "economic restructuring over the past 35 years [that] has blurred…distinctions [between] rural economies…and their urban counterparts" (Nelson et al. 2010:344). According to Phillips (1993), the drivers of rural gentrification stem from the uneven circulation of capital and the related outcome of certain consumers wanting to buy into particular lifestyles. Smith argued that rural gentrification is fueled by the desire to consume green space (1998). Building on the work of Phillips (1998), Smith (2002) theorized that gentrifiers consider rural places to have "a sense of community…supportive and engaging local institutions, healthy, bucolic and less-competitive environments,

and [a place to] search for the self" (Smith 2002:453). The perceived interpretations of an idyllic rural life push gentrifiers into the rural areas that are then commodified or treated as "a positional good—that is, into something which is fixed in supply and whose consumption is dependent on one's position in society" (Phillips 1993:126). Explanations of the causes of rural gentrification demonstrate the overlap between production explanations of gentrification and consumer explanations.

Nelson (2001) discussed the phenomenon of rural gentrification in the American West and argued that "debates about local land use planning, conflicts between 'newcomers' and old-timers,' and new perceptions of the environment have led to visible divisions within communities across the region" (p. 395). He (2001) claimed that tensions between newcomers and old-timers arise because of the decline in traditional agricultural and loss of factory jobs. As the economy moves from manufacturing to being oriented around the service industry, new and more flexible white-collar jobs become available to some individuals who may choose to live remotely. These individuals' "greater purchasing power enables them to…impose quite profound changes on the social and physical environment" due to their wealth in comparison to others in the community (Ghose 2004:529).

Flora and Flora (1996) found that newcomers tend to make up the bulk of leaders in "economic development corporations and chambers of commerce in rural areas" and are focused on creating development agendas that suit their

own needs (p. 218). The same study also concluded that newcomers are often focused on “the environmental capital of locality” meaning emphasizing recreational tourism, boutiques, art galleries, and other modes of development focused on perceived visions of the place (1996:218). Similarly, Nelson (2001) noted that newcomers are often at the forefront of redefining land use as the “preservation and consumption of landscapes” during economic shifts (p. 398).

Walker and Fortmann (2003) focused their work on a case study of Nevada County, California and observed that the former mining community there has experienced a rapid in-migration of gentrifiers. As a result, tensions over community planning have “ignited a political firestorm over a proposal by the environmentalist-dominated county government to incorporate landscape-scale aesthetic and environmental principles into county planning” (2003:469). The authors posited that decisions regarding how landscapes should look and property owners’ rights have emerged since the gentrification process began. Spain (1993) discussed tension between newcomers and old-timers in the United Sates and noted that “when the number of new residents reaches a critical mass, and when resources are reallocated and subsequently privatized, conflict over values and definitions of community eventually ensue between ‘been-heres’ and ‘come-heres’ ” (p.157). Community tensions are often class based and represent a major tension between the consumption of rural landscapes as idyllic vistas and bucolic playgrounds for the enjoyment of the affluent and the use-based needs of lower classes.

Nelson (2001) studied the phenomenon of rural gentrification in the American West by focusing on four case studies in Colorado, Washington, Utah, and Idaho and argued that "debates about local land use planning, conflicts between 'newcomers' and old-timers,' and new perceptions of the environment have led to visible divisions within communities across the region" (p. 395). Nelson (2001) also linked these cases to larger macro-level processes, explaining that tensions between newcomers and old-timers rise in part because "such shifts are symptomatic of deeply penetrating forces of restructuring operating on several macro and micro level scales" (p. 397). Furthermore, Nelson (2001) remarked "the shift from resource extraction to preservation and consumption of landscapes, new class divisions are likely to emerge in rural Western communities" (p. 398). Subsequent work on the American West used Nelson's research to expand on these new class divisions.

In his case study of Montana, Hines (2010a) argued that rural gentrifiers in Montana are particularly interested in "enacting cultural projects akin to those of tourists but doing so with the intention of permanently writing them into the social and physical landscape" (p. 509). That study divided gentrifiers into three groups: retirees, the wealthy/famous, and younger ex-urban members of the middle class. One of the key differences between old-timers and newcomers in Hines' study (2010a) is that old-timers are "concerned with seeing the land of Park County produce materially tangible results through its three traditional industries: agriculture, silviculture, and mining" whereas newcomers "tend to believe… that

the lands of Park and Greater Yellowstone ecosystem are best used to produce experiences" (p. 510). Hines was not only interested in class tensions in gentrified communities, but also explored how "rural gentrification and other practices in which middle-class Americans engage represents both continuity and change within US socio-cultural patterns; specifically…how it is the product of the cultural forces of *both* Modernity *and* post industrialization" (2010b:302). Hines' (2010a; 2010b) work touched upon important social themes in gentrification literature and situated it within the larger framework of political economy.

Like other consumption-based explanations of gentrification, Smith (1998) argued that rural gentrification is fueled by the desire to consume green space a process he calls *greentrification*. In a study of the Hebden Bridge district of West Yorkshire in the United Kingdom, Smith (2002), building on his work with Phillips (1998), posited that rural areas are considered possess "a sense of community, a propensity to work at home/freelance, supportive and engaging local institutions, healthy, bucolic and less-competitive environments, and [a place to] search for the self" by gentrifiers (Smith 2002:453). The Hebden Bridge district is also bound to perceptions about lifestyle choice, and gentrifiers "draw upon the historical legacy of non-conformity…and an acceptance of 'otherness'; exemplified by the in-migration of 'hippies' during the 1960s and more recently new age travellers" (2002:455). Perceptions of rural community and the possibility of creating a sustainable or green lifestyle appear to be the forces

driving newcomers to rural areas. Embedded in these studies of rural gentrification are issues of environmental privilege. There are no studies to my knowledge in the existing sociological literature on rural gentrification in the United States that deals specifically with *green* economic development and revitalization projects as it relates to the arrival of affluent newcomers – that is, environmental gentrification – in rural communities.

The Production of Place

At the root of the gentrification process is production of space and place. Lefebvre (1974) argued that space is a complex social construction. A social production of space is fundamental to the production of modern society or, in other words, is crucial to maintaining capitalism because space becomes a tool by which the hegemonic class can produce and reproduce its dominance. Stanley (2012) defined place as a "social process, the product of human relationships lived out in a specific landscape" (p. 2). In other words, place is often a material, tangible location and place is socially constructed. Building on the work of Tuan (1977), Gieryn (2000) suggested that "places are doubly constructed: most are built or in some way physically carved out…[and] are also interpreted, narrated, perceived, felt, understood, and imagined" (p. 465). Gieryn (2000) further defined place as "a unique spot in the universe...[a] space filled up by people, practices, objects, and representations" (p. 464-465). Unlike an ambiguous, undifferentiated space, place is specific and identifiable because of

the meanings we attach to it (Gieryn 2000; Hillier and Hanson 1984; Tuan 1974). Massey (1994) argued that places have multiple identities and develop across time. Furthermore, she posited that class differences can be clearly seen through a spatial analysis.

Low and Altman (1992) defined place attachment as the bond between people and places. The study of place attachment dates back to Tuan's (1974) work on sense of place in which he argued that place attachment, like place, is dynamic and socially constructed. Different socio-cultural groups "may attribute diverse meanings to the same spatial setting" (Kianicka et al 2006:55). Place attachment is not static, but bound to memory and time. Stanley (2012) noted that "individual lives and the collective life of particular places carry in them history and the global issues of the time" (p.3) and described the "relatively new regional identification" of Appalachia as valuable for exploring the layers of place attachment in the region (p.158). Stanley (2012) also argued that the way in which people use place attachment to make sense of their lives is changing, these shifts are bound to the macro-level economic forces, such as resource extraction, and migration patterns of people moving out of the region in search of jobs: "One's place, however central to one's identity it may be, is of secondary importance to social status, economic success, professional advancement, and full access to consumer goods" (p. 3). An understanding of the social construction of place and place attachment in this instance illuminates the

layered complexity of power structures that take hold when newcomers move to rural areas such as South Central Appalachia.

Manzo and Perkins (2006) posited “while place attachments can form the basis for cooperation and community action, they can also lie at the root of community conflict” and concluded that place attachment is tied to larger socio-economic processes and “the creation and preservation of assets related to place and the built environment” (p. 340). Kianicka et al. (2006) argued that place attachment stems from how groups identify with a place using the example of tourists and locals – tourists *experience* place and locals’ *inhabit* place – in their case study of a Swiss Alpine village. Other researchers have explored similar phenomena by examining gentrification; some have characterized this type of place creation as the colonization of poor areas (Hines 2010; Phillips 1993). Flora and Flora (1996) explored place attachment as a complicated reaction to socio-economic forces manifested as events such as the migration of affluent middle class groups into poorer areas. These examples are useful in highlighting the multi-layered dimensions of gentrification.

Similarly, Giddens (1984,1995) argued that places are shaped by human practices and social institutions that simultaneously influence and create these same phenomena. Place is therefore dynamically layered and illustrates the “plural, hybrid, and fluid” nature of contemporary societies constantly undergoing the “discursive reconstruction of traditions [as the] central…experience of modernization and modernity” (Keohane and Kuhling 2004:7). Place is also

bound to the temporal. Simmel's (1971) perception of time elucidates how the social construction of place is multi-layered and claimed that "the 'present' denotes the collision of past and future…It always contains a bit of the past, and a somewhat smaller bit of the future" (p. 359). Perhaps this is best understood in relation to Lukacs' (1971) theory of *transcendental homelessness*, which implies that under modernity humans increasingly feel "precarious, fragile, and uncertain" (as explained by Keohane and Kuhling 2004:123). These experiences of modernity are rooted in macro-level economic processes and may push gentrifiers to rural areas in search of idyllic communities and the fulfillment of dreams of creating ecologically sustainable places. Echoing Marx's theory of alienation and Durkheim's anomie, modernity creates frayed social relationships, estrangement from oneself, and isolation from one's community, even as individuals come to rely more on one another for survival as a result of the division of labor. As some scholars have suggested, the social construction of place and the subsequent phenomenon of place attachment is a way that humans seek to counter alienation and anomie. In gentrifying areas, people may move to a new space to counter feelings of alienation, seeking out community. A related outcome is the combined displacement of lower income residents and the bestowal of environmental privileges upon affluent newcomers.

Uneven Development

Smith (2008) developed perhaps the most useful theory in understanding the construction of space and place in proposing that “uneven development is the systematic geographic expression of the contradictions inherent in the very constitutions and structure of capital” (p. 4). He discussed a dualism of nature – external nature and universal nature – and highlighted two paths through which these ideologies of nature form: nature in science and poetic nature. Nature in science is the mastery of nature through technology, or the objectification and abstraction of nature; for example, natural resources are seen as “external objects of labor to be worked up as commodities” (Smith 2008:15). Poetic nature also objectifies nature and further accentuates the human/nature divide: humans are part of nature, yet humans are separate from nature. In addition, this romanticism of nature (e.g. subdued wildernesses as playgrounds for urbanites or the pastoral artwork popular during the Industrial Revolution) treats dualism as a universal and natural truth. Smith (2008) argued that Marx was the first to offer an “analytical reconciliation” to overcome this pervasive conceptual dualism by discussing nature under capitalism, but that Marx’s attempt is never fully explained (p. 31). In this view the conceptualization of nature is complex and at times contradictory, and the dualistic conceptualization of nature is flawed.

Smith (2008) also defined the production of nature and the production of space, explaining the production of nature and illustrating how under capitalism “human beings produce nature at a world scale” (p. 88). This formulation is an

interpretation of Marx and thus is particularly concerned with production and labor.[6] A few key points stand out in this analysis. He reiterated Marx's point that capitalism, as a system, is dialectical; as it frees humans from dependence on "nature" because of a permanent and expected surplus, it also relies on class structure and the exploitation of a large part of society. This has conceptual ramifications because humans begin to identify themselves as separate from nature. As the focus is no longer subsistence but accumulation, use value becomes exchange value. Exchange value becomes "increasingly regulated by social forms and institutions," and with this "access to nature is unequally distributed" (Smith 2008:60-61). A second nature develops from dependence on exchange value that hastens the emancipation from first nature previously unaltered by human activity, yet deepens dependence on the produced second nature. In other words, the production of nature is increasingly amplified by capitalism. Again, these processes are conceptualized as dualistic: external nature (domination over resources) and universal nature (capitalism is natural). The importance of this process in Smith's estimation is that it is increasingly global and no part of the earth is immune from being commodified. Consequently, the conceptual framework of nature, how humans see themselves in and of nature, is increasingly complex.

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[6] It is important to note that Smith does not differentiate between an *early* Marx and a *later* Marx.

Smith (2008) posited that space, like nature, is produced. In other words, there is power in the imposition of place onto seemingly blank space (e.g. colonialism). Geographical space is where we can best see uneven development (e.g. slums and gated communities). Much of Smith's (2008:89) theory of uneven development in the production of nature and space addresses "*how* we produce nature and *who* controls this production of nature" (p. 89). His theory of uneven development relies heavily on Marx's outline of differentiation and equalization, yet extends to nature and space to illustrate the dialectical nature of capitalism. The scales of differentiation, put simply, are the ways in which the division of labor and social capital are increasingly divided on macro and micro levels. At the same time as these sub-structures within sub-structures within sub-structures are developing there is also the tendency toward equalization. Equalization, unlike differentiation, occurs when technology, markets, and wages tend toward equilibrium. However, as Marx pointed out and Smith reiterated, this equilibrium can never truly be reached because of capitalism's dependence on uneven development. Gentrification is an example of Smith's theory on a spatial level as a manifestation of the contradictions in a physical sense. Physical spaces are remolded over and over for accumulation to remain constant.

Smith was particularly interested in the improbability of spatial equilibrium under capitalism, arguing that equilibrium is impossible under capitalism because when capital moves to where profit is highest specific spaces develop unevenly, and in this way capital see-saws between undeveloped, developed, and de-

valorized areas. Although Smith compared the process of capital's seesawing to a plague of locusts, he also maintained that there is a way to see the world beyond what capitalism looks like. Part of this, he argued, is the ability to conceptualize the production of nature and space beyond a dualistic approach; the other part is to understand how the process of uneven development occurs and to situate it within the historical moment.[7] A result of uneven development is that one group is privileged over another.

Neoliberalism

Uneven development is exacerbated by neoliberal capitalism. Neoliberalism, as an economic theory, emphasizes private property rights, individual liberty, free trade, and a *free market* unfettered by state institutions (Harvey 2007). Neoliberalism emerged as an economic and political agenda after a "crisis of capital accumulation" in the 1970s marked by inflation and rising unemployment (Harvey 2007:27). Neoliberal policies were an attempt to reignite economies and protect the wealth of elites. Under neoliberalism, success is measured by gross domestic product (GDP), a measure of the flow of capital through a market. In practice, successful states in terms of GDP under

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[7] There are two major omissions in Smith's analysis of the production of nature and space. First, he downplays the role and historical development of the state. Instead he simply interjects on a few occasions that the state "expedites and arbitrates the stable expansion of capitalism" (2008:72). Second, he omits the role that virtual spaces play (e.g. cyberspace, social media, etc.).

neoliberalism rely on the state apparatus to protect markets through subsidies and social programs and to absorb externalized costs like pollution (Polanyi [1944] 2001; Harvey 2010). Institutions such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), International Monetary Fund (IMF), and World Bank (WB) largely govern international trade and finance under neoliberalism, and in effect have set the tone for privatization, finacialization, the management and manipulation of crises, and state redistributions (Harvey 2010; Robinson 2004). Critics of neoliberalism maintain that environmental degradation, spatial inequality, and externalized costs are normal and necessary functions of capitalism and reveal the transformative and dialectical nature of capitalism. These critiques are at the root of much of the work being done in political economy of the environment. To better understand the process of environmental gentrification and environmental privilege it is vital to also capture the historical and economic structures in which this process is occurring. Environmental sociology provides a framework to begin to this course of understanding.

Political Economy of the Environment and Environmental Sociology

The latter part of the nineteenth century and early part of the twentieth century were marked by rapid industrialization in the United States (Cronon 1991; Rome 2001). As one of the first responses, the conservation movement focused primarily on land management and the creation of national parks. Many early conservationists were not against industry and in fact advocated careful

planning of economic growth. By the 1960s, growing public awareness of air and water pollution and increased concern about nuclear fallout, population growth, and chemical contamination became part of the public discourse (Cable and Cable 1995). For example, Rachel Carson's classic *Silent Spring* (1962) depicted the harmful effects of the pesticide DDT on bird species and other animals and the potential negative effects on humans. Carson accused the chemical industry of perpetuating harm by deceiving the public. The book was groundbreaking because it addressed industry for its role in polluting the environment, because it articulated the interconnectivity of all species and ecosystems, and because of its accessibility. The loosely defined environmental movement gained momentum during the decade that followed. In response was the formation of several policy initiatives in the United States: among many legislative programs, the Environmental Protection Agency was formed in 1970, the Clean Air Act was greatly amended for stricter controls over pollution in 1970, and the Clean Water Act was passed in 1972 (Cable and Cable 1995; Rome 2001).

Environmental sociology officially came to fruition as a discipline in the 1970s in conjunction with the growing acknowledgement of environmental destruction across the globe. Environmental sociology as a sub-field explores human-nature relations. Among the first scholars who considered themselves environmental sociologists, Dunlap (1978) and Catton (1980) discussed *the age of exuberance* and *the tragic story of human success*. Catton and Dunlap's major concerns were that the earth has reached its carrying capacity in terms of human

population and heavy reliance on resources, particularly fossil fuels, is making the biosphere inhabitable. They (1978; 1980; 2002) also argued that sociology is anthropocentric and that "the HEP [human exemptionalist paradigm] blinded mainstream sociologists to the importance of environmental problems, but predisposed them to accept…that endless growth and progress were not threatened by resources scarcities or other ecological constraints" (2002:335). Catton and Dunlap (1978) advocated for a *new ecological paradigm* in which sociologists reorient their work in ways that would consider humans impact on the ecological world.[8]

Environmental sociology also has deep roots in nineteenth-century classical social theory, although this has not always been obvious (Buttel 2002; Buttel and Humphrey 2002). Buttel (2002) suggested that classical theory is of "particular importance in environmental sociology" because environmental sociology needs "some of the tools that were initially developed by the classical theorists" to conceptualize ecological issues (p. 18-19). Although classical theorists did not focus on ecological questions, Buttel (2002) argued that "not only did Marx, Durkheim, and Weber incorporate what we might regard as ecological components in their works, they did so from a variety of standpoints"

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[8] Catton and Dunlap have been criticized for their perceived criticism of the classics – Marx, Weber, and Durkheim. Dunlap refuted these claims and argued that his and Catton's aim was to criticize mid-century scholars for misinterpreting the classics, not the classics themselves (Buttel, et. al 2002; Dunlap 2002).

(p. 20). Marx and Engels worked through a materialist ontology and believed that the production of labor cannot be understood separately from nature. Furthermore, Marx was not only ecological in his early work, but his later work discussed "the penetration of capitalism as a cause of massive air pollution and other threats to health and welfare workers, and to the need for political economy to treat relations between society and nature" (Buttel 2002:20). Marx (1867) articulated the consequences of humans' domination of nature throughout his work on *alienation* and his conceptualization of *commodity fetishism.* Alienation describes the estrangement between a worker and her/his labor, and social and natural environment. Marx conceived of the "capitalist mode of production" to highlight how individual workers are separated from the final product of their labor, from the process of production, from each other, and from their own sense of self, and *from nature* (Tucker [1844] [1845-1846] 1978). In this relationship the worker is objectified and "becomes an ever cheaper commodity the more commodities he creates" ([1844] 1978: 71). For Marx, this type of alienation hinged on the development of private property of the means of production and the domination of nature. Alienation is a moment in the dialectical process of the ongoing exchange between humanity and nature, as that which perpetuates capitalism is also destructive, as evidenced most obviously by environmental destruction such as habitat destruction, species loss, and streams of toxicity and pollution.[9] Marx's notion of commodity fetishism builds on his concept of

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[9] In Marx's early work he discusses the potential for a proletariat uprising that takes back

alienation. Commodity fetishism occurs when humans fetishize or give meaning to inanimate objects, specifically consumer products ("commodities"), thus triggering and sustaining a process that masks the social relationships that created the commodity; humans and their labor are thus also objectified ([1887] 1978). Environmental sociology continues to feature a substantial Marxist tradition, but has strains of Durkheim and Weber too.

Durkheim was primarily focused on finding out how societies maintain their cohesion and "relied heavily on metaphors from Darwinian evolution and organismic biology" in his work (Buttel 2002:21; Järvikoski 1996). He also discussed issues of population density, resource scarcity, and the competition for survival in *The Division of Labor in Society* (1893), which "set forth the major elements of a theoretical perspective that has come to be known as (classical) human ecology" (Buttel 2002:21). Although the environmental issues were not at the forefront of Durkheim's or the other classical theorists' work, it is important to note that they were acknowledged (Järvikoski 1996).

Weber broke with the evolutionary paradigm associated with Marx and Durkheim and instead argued that social change is determined by "shifting constellations of subjective, structural, and technological forces that ultimately were rooted in human motivations and history" (Buttel 2002: 21). Weber used an

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ownership of the means of production through a political uprising. However in his later or mature work he examines the potential for alienation to saturate society because individuals, over successive generations, are more and more alienated from each other and also from the external world ([1844] 1978, [1867] 1978).

interpretive approach to study the rise of capitalism and modern society. In both *The Agrarian Sociology of Ancient Civilizations* ([1924] 2013) and *General Economic History (*[1927] 2013) Weber dealt directly with the impact of natural resources on social organization and vice versa (Foster 2011; Murphy 1994; West 1984).

The classical theorists had to work within the historical moment in which they lived, and this may well have determined the degree of attention they paid to the natural world. Several contemporary environmental political economy scholars have taken on the project of examining how the classical theorists dealt with ecological issues and what sociologists, among others, can glean from this.

Treadmill of Production

Schnaiberg introduced the treadmill of production theory in 1980 and was the first approach made by an environmental socioloist to specifically address ecological issues through the lens of political economy. Buttel (2004) called it "arguably the single most important concept and theory to have emerged within North American environmental sociology" (p. 323). In his analysis, Schnaiberg (1980) argued that environmental degradation was amplified after World War II because of increased investment in production, which ultimately led to the constantly increasing demand for natural resources. In other words, because of an accumulation of capital in Western economies capital is used to replace production with newer technologies to increase profits; newer technologies

require less labor but more resources. Each time this treadmill rotates, three things occur: workers' rights are weakened because laborers are under the constant threat of losing their jobs, environmental problems are worsened due to demand for natural resources and pollution from production, and profits increase for capitalists (Gould, Pellow, Schnaiberg 2004). On a spatial level, links can be made between the treadmill of production and related processes like uneven development and gentrification.

The term "treadmill" comes from the treadmills used in late-nineteenth century prisons in Great Britain. Prisoners were forced to walk as much as twelve hours a day on a revolving stair step that rotated the wheels of various machines; the treadmill metaphor in environmental sociology implies that "society [is] running in place without moving forward" (Gould, Pellow, Schnaiberg 2004:297). During the twentieth century, with each rotation of the treadmill, the demand for workers continued to decline, factories moved where labor was cheaper, and the middle class began losing labor rights and, eventually, jobs. In the United States, unions were largely crushed, and over just a few decades many industries relocated abroad during deindustrialization and the economic restructuring of the U.S. economy.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s when Schnaiberg was first writing about the treadmill of production, the U.S. economy was stagnating. Incited in part by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) oil embargo and the subsequent energy crisis, inflation and unemployment soared in the United

States. Policy-makers implemented new economic models calling for deregulation, privatization of state owned services, and freeing of trade barriers. During the 1980s the new economic model, or neoliberalism, reigned supreme. Funds for the newly formed Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) were cut substantially. The environmental movement in the United States splintered: large environmental organizations like the Sierra Club and the Nature Conservancy directed their energy toward mass mailings, political canvassing, and lobbying, while smaller groups worked at the grass-roots level. In essence, there is empirical evidence to suggest the relevance of the treadmill of production metaphor in explain how and why environmental harms are related to the capitalist economic system.

As observed in the work of Gould, Pellow, and Schnaiberg (2008), policy makers and business leaders argue that economic growth equates to social progress even when this is not the case. A group of workers does emerge during this process of new production as managers, marketers/advertisers, financial advisors, and customer service representatives. However, these credentialed professionals are under constant pressure to “increase ‘worker productivity’ to sustain corporate profitability by reducing expenses” (Gould, Pellow, and Schnaiberg 2004:299). Moreover, because producers perpetuate the treadmill of production, consumers do not have the power to stop it. Consumers can accept or reject products, but ultimately they “have no influence over the allocation of capital to productive technologies” (Gould, Pellow, and Schnaiberg 2004:300). In

other words, the proponents of the treadmill of production theory argue that demand is fabricated – socially produced – by producers, and an analysis of consumption cannot get at the complexity of what is happening "to place consumption decisions first in our analysis would obscure the power relations embedded in the political economy" (Gould, Pellow, Schnaiberg 2004:301).[10] The authors (2004) also rejected the idea that existing corporations that market green products have the desire or capacity to change production or ameliorate ecological or social problems. Focusing on green products changes what is being consumed but does nothing to slow the treadmill of production (Gunderson 2013). In gentrifying areas, developers focused on green initiatives have little impact on the larger structures, which ultimately create the harms they seek to ameliorate.

Proponents of the treadmill of production theory point to habitat destruction as the best marker for the expansion of the treadmill either through resource extraction or waste disposal and warn that environmental detriment increases with each rotation of the treadmill. Workers with the most agency, which is even at most of a limited degree, live in suburbs or communities

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[10] Schnaiberg (1980) originally believed when he published the treadmill of production theory that members of the public would be compelled to immediately change their behavior. He misjudged the effect of that concept, and the political climate of the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s has had the opposite effect on public sentiment; it seems instead that fewer people are aware of the treadmill's effects on their lives and/or they feel powerless to stop it, an issue that the proponents of critical theory deal with explicitly.

disconnected from the acute environmental impact of production (Gould, Pellow, and Schnaiberg 2004; 2008). When applied to environmental and rural gentrification, the treadmill of production theory helps elucidate the production processes that push gentrifiers into rural areas; gentrifiers seek the countryside as an escape from the habitat destruction. Gentrifiers also create so-called green businesses that they believe will slow or stop habitat destruction. The same theory may also explain environmental privilege as one middle class group displaces another.

The most prominent critique of the treadmill of production theory to come out of environmental sociology is that it is a specifically Marxist argument that never acknowledges Marx or makes reference to capitalism (Foster, Clark, and York 2010; Foster 2005).[11] This is important because politically at the time it was

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[11] Although the theory is Marxist in intent, it never explicitly claims this designation. In fact, Gould, Pellow, and Schnaiberg (2008) only mentioned Marx once in *The Treadmill of Production*. Foster (2005) stated that the treadmill concept is a Marxist interpretation of the capitalist economic system, yet it never directly addresses capitalism as the root of environmental problems. Foster further contended that using a treadmill as a metaphor for capitalism first appeared in Marx's early work about factory life, but that references to such in Schnaiberg's work remain undervalued or absent. Instead, Schnaiberg (1980) relied on the work of members of the *Monthly Review School* (particularly Baran, Sweezy, and Magdoff who are considered to be Marxist scholars). According to Foster (2005), Schnaiberg used the monopoly-capital framework to make his claim that each cycle of production deepens environmental problems and, in this way, incorporates "the analysis of the production and absorption of economic surplus while also taking into account the concomitant development of ecological scarcity" (p. 11). Moreover, Foster (2005) considered that Schnaiberg's treadmill of production recognized the problem of accumulation, but emphasized production and technology instead, "most readers not already attuned to these issues will not see the relation of the treadmill of production to accumulation at all" (p. 15). In addition, Schnaiberg's

dangerous to one's career in the United States to use Marxist terminology, revealing how the collection and dissemination of knowledge is bound to the historical moment, a key focus of the Frankfurt School critical theorists.

Treadmill of Accumulation and the Metabolic Rift

Foster (2005) claimed that the core issue when studying capitalism is accumulation rather than production because it is the constant need to accumulate capital that spins the treadmill, not production. Sweezy noted (cited in Foster, Clark, and York 2010) that

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most radical claim was the "recognition that the treadmill was a system, monopoly capitalism, and that the system, understood in these terms, could not be reversed short of a major revolt from below" (Foster 2005:11). Foster further noted that Schnaiberg's argument that the dialectical processes of the treadmill will ultimately create the conditions for its demise was derived almost verbatim from early Marx.

Foster (2005) also questioned how the treadmill of production theory and his own version of a Marxist political economy of the environment grew at the same time, but had "almost no interaction?" suggesting that the political environment of the 1980s and 1990s forced many sociologists to become more insular within their discipline and citing Schnaiberg as an example (p. 12). For example, the idea of educating labor discussed in Schnaiberg's first book *The Environment* (1980) was absent in Schnaiberg and Gould's *Environment and Society* (1994) (Foster 2005). Foster asked whether the term "treadmill of production," which had "none of the baggage of political or ideological critique associated with it" (e.g. naming capitalism), is necessary or if this non-association with Marxism is crippling to the advancement of environmental sociology: "Did not the very metaphor of the treadmill, although skillfully employed, detract from the historical critique that was needed?" (Foster 2005:13). In Foster's view, the treadmill of production theory is useful, but has major flaws, such as highlighting production over accumulation and ignoring the classical work of Marx.

> a system driven by capital accumulation is one that never stands still, one that is forever changing, adopting new and discarding old methods of production and distribution, opening new territories… caught up in this process of relentless innovation and expansion, the system runs roughshod over even its own beneficiaries if they get in its way…as far as the natural environment is concerned, capitalism perceives it…as the paramount ends of profit-making and still more capital accumulation. (P. 76)

Foster (2005) also argued that the Schnaiberg's treadmill of production focuses too much on scale and not enough on structure, in that "it captures the quantitative aspect of the confrontation between economy and ecology. But the more qualitative dimensions of the problem frequently get lost" (p. 15). In other words, it addresses scale, but ignores the system; emphasizing production over accumulation ignores the "metabolic rift" (Foster 2005:15). Proponents of Foster's metabolic rift theory consider Marx to be the forefather of the theory.

Foster (1999) argued that metabolic rift refers the disruption in the exchange between social systems and natural systems and the potential for economic and ecological crisis as outlined by Marx, emphasizing Marx's ([1867] 1978:416-417) work in *Capital Volume I* discussing soil health and agriculture, in particular the quote that discusses the division between town and country "disturbs the metabolic interaction between man and the earth, i.e. it prevents the return to the soil of its constituent elements consumed by man in the form of food and clothing; hence it hinders the operation of the eternal natural condition for the

lasting fertility of the soil." The most useful example of the metabolic rift comes from Clark and Foster (2009) in their analysis of the 19th century guano/nitrates trade between Peru and Chile to Britain whose farmers used guano for fertilizer. That practice symbolized the decline of soil fertility in Britain due to intensive agriculture and illustrated a myriad of effects – the metabolic rift – including the importation of Chinese laborers (who were treated very poorly) to Peru, the degradation of Peruvian and Chilean eco-systems, a war over nitrate ownership, and the end result of debt ridden economies (Clark and Foster 2009). This study exemplifies the interconnectedness of the substructure and superstructure that Marx described.[12]

This idea of metabolic rift, stemming from Marx, is important to this study because it describes the physical reality of environmental detriment in contemporary society. It is not surprising that individuals are becoming more aware of environmental harms, nor is it surprising that based on the treadmill of production and of accumulation (and Marx's alienation), there appear to be fewer and fewer options for mitigating these harms.

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[12] For Marx, the substructure has two basic components: the forces of production (means of production and labor power) and the relations of production (class relations and work relations). In his model, the productive forces are always undergoing some sort of transformation and threaten class relations, which in turn create class conflict. However, the superstructure – that is social institutions– ultimately keeps the dialectical nature of the system hidden. These social institutions (religion, science, political systems, etc.) also create societal values, which can potentially hamper resistance.

Proponents of the treadmill of accumulation theory and metabolic rift make the case that the spread of capitalism and its ill effects, particularly on the biosphere, “potentially constitutes the global epicenter of a new environmental proletariat” in areas where people “have nothing to lose from the radical changes necessary to avert (or adapt to) disaster” (Foster, Clark, and York 2010:440). In other words, proponents of the treadmill of production, treadmill of accumulation, and metabolic rift theories support a traditionalist Marxist approach by assuming that pointing out the contradictions of capitalism will lead to a system overhaul or other type of class action and at times seem to be puzzled that this does not appear to be the case. These theories offer very useful modes of analysis for exploring production and consumption patterns of environmental gentrification. Implicit throughout these theories, though, is the role that ideology plays in perpetuating capitalism, a topic that critical theorists deal with explicitly, and which is key to illuminating how and if humans can adequately respond to environmental crises.

The revival of the classics in the tradition of the political economy of the environment offers renewed frameworks to interpret how economic changes transform social and cultural life that are particularly useful for this dissertation. However, while the predominantly Marxist theories of uneven development, treadmill of production, treadmill of accumulation, and metabolic rift offer substantial analysis of the interplay between economy and the ecological world – the need for constant capital accumulation and its detrimental effects on the

biosphere and workers – they do little to address the permeating effects of capitalist ideology. Theorists within the broad tradition of critical theory, particularly those connected with the first generation Frankfurt School, offer insight into the transformative nature and perpetuation of capitalism's logic, especially if we use their theoretical orientation as a research framework (Dahms 2010, 2014).

Frankfurt School Critical Theory

Very little work within environmental sociology addresses Frankfurt School critical theory or the scholars that have followed in their footsteps, even though this tradition has great potential to expand our understanding of socio-nature relationships both theoretically and methodologically. [13] In general, American sociologists have remained oblivious to or dismissive of critical theorists during the mid to late twentieth century (Greisman 1986; Van den Berg 1980). Likewise, many environmental sociologists have also largely ignored critical theory (Buttel et al. 2002) or offered critiques (Foster 2000; York and Clark 2010; York and Mancus 2009).[14] Wheling (2002), one of the first social theorists to merge critical theory and ecological issues, argued that "as early as the 1950s, Critical Theory suggested a comprehensive conceptual framework of social theory that appears

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[13] From here on I will refer to the first generation of the Frankfurt School interchangeably as the "Frankfurt School" or as "critical theory." However, it is important to acknowledge that critical theory implies a much wider and broader range of theories not discussed in this project.

[14] These critiques are useful however in addressing the Frankfurt School rather than ignoring it.

to be of great potential interest and relevance for any sociological attempt at combating the environmental problems of present societies" (p. 144). Recent sociologists (Bell and York 2010; Gunderson 2014, 2015; Stoner and Melanthopoulos 2015; Stoner 2013, 2014) building on the work of other scholars (Biro 2005, 2011; Luke 1997) have added significant contributions to the slowly expanding application of critical theory to socio-nature relations, specifically in analyzing the role of ideology in the perpetuation of environmental problems.[15] In this project, I see my work as a part of and a contribution to the effort to develop and promote this new, critical-theoretical paradigm in environmental sociology, to update critical theory for purposes of social research in the United States and in the twenty-first century.

The Institute for Social Research (*Institut für Sozialforschung*) was established in Frankfurt, Germany in 1923 with financial backing from Felix Weil, a Marxist scholar from a wealthy family. The original purpose of the Institute was to study labor issues and analyze how Germany could become a socialist nation (Jay 1973; Wiggerhaus 1994; Dahms 2011). The most prominent and well-known first generation theorists related to the Institute – Max Horkheimer, Theodor W. Adorno, Herbert Marcuse, and Erich Fromm, with Walter Benjamin as an affiliate

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[15] Other scholars like Mills (1991) and Salleh (1998) have added critical perspectives to ecological issues in the sub-field of eco-feminism, however, these are not specifically related to the Frankfurt School tradition.

– are often referred to as the *Frankfurt School*.[16] The classical theorists – Marx and Weber above all – were of particular importance to the Frankfurt School theorists, and their theoretical reconceptualization of classical theory symbolizes a fracture between traditional Marxism and the implications of a reflexive turn. Of particular importance to the Frankfurt School theorists were Marx's concept of alienation (and later Lukács' concept of reification) and Weber's ideas relating to rationalization and legitimation (Dahms 2011; Stoner 2013). The Frankfurt School theorists were also deeply influenced by Freud, Hegel, Nietzsche (in Adorno), Heidegger (in Marcuse), and Schopenhauer (in Horkheimer) (Anderson 1976; Gunderson 2014). However, the early Frankfurt School theorists were by no means a unified group in terms of their conceptualizations of modern society.

The 1920s had been a confusing time for Marxist intellectuals in Germany and presumably had set the stage for the questions that the Frankfurt School would carry into the following decades. The Russian Revolution had happened in an agrarian society, whereas Germany was one of the most advanced technological and industrial societies and socialism, contrary to what many regarded as Marx's prediction, was not taking hold. There was a strong labor movement in Germany – the strongest in a western industrial society – but proponents had very little actual power. After the German Revolution of 1918 and the end of World War I, the new political system was highly unstable. This was a

[16] Fromm left the Institute in 1939. After a failed attempt to escape the Nazis, Benjamin committed suicide in 1940.

period of expectation and concern for those involved in the Institute for Social Research.

In 1930, Horkheimer took the reins of the Institute for Social Research from Grünberg. His programmatic essay, written and published in New York in 1937, distinguished between traditional and critical theory for the first time, reassessed the goals of the Institute, critiqued enlightenment ideals and positivism, and called for an interdisciplinary approach to studying society: “the real social function of science is not made manifest; it speaks not of what theory means in human life, but only of what it means in the isolated sphere in which for historical reasons it comes into existence” (Horkheimer [1937] 1972:197). He envisioned the Institute as a site for illuminating links between psychology, political economy, aesthetics, economics, and culture (Dahms 2011; Wiggerhaus 1994). Horkheimer ([1937] 1972:211) conceived of critical theory as an emancipatory theoretical tradition, “Critical thinking is the function neither of the isolated individual nor of a sum-total of individuals. Its subject is rather a definite individual in his real relation to other individuals and groups, in his conflict with a particular class, and, finally the resultant web of relationships with the social totality and with nature.” Above all, in his inaugural address, Horkheimer believed that critical theory must be “explanatory, practical, and normative, all at the same time” (Bonham 2013:2). Horkheimer delineated critical theory as an important (and fluid) tool to capture and scrutinize not what society is, but how people think about society (Dahms 2011). In this way critical theory is a theoretical and

methodological tool to better understand how ideology operates in modern society, especially the *logic of capital*, a concept intended to highlight our difficulties, if not inability, to “explain" modern society, given that we are products of and embedded in the capitalist system, and thus ill-equipped to meet the challenge of disentangling the contradictions of this form of social organization, *unless* we are to develop and in the position to rely on a set of tools specifically designed for this purpose – *critical* theory. In this way, the early Frankfurt School theorists were dedicated to critical self-reflexivity regarding “the gravity concrete socio-historical conditions exert on the process of illuminating those conditions” (Dahms 2015:370), a characteristic that sets them apart from other theoretical traditions.

As Horkheimer ([1937] 1972) said,

> If, however, the theoretician and his specific object are seen as forming a dynamic unity with the oppressed class, so that his presentation of societal contradictions is not merely an expression of the concrete historical situation but also a force within to stimulate change, then his real function emerges (P. 215).

Horkheimer also proposed that there should be a strong commitment to understanding phenomena on their own terms, regardless of the political repercussions.

During the first year of Horkheimer's directorship of the Institute for Social Research, Hitler and the National Socialist Party came to power. Hitler became chancellor of Germany and established a one-party state. In hindsight, the rise of fascism and the many atrocities that occurred are not surprising in light of the events leading up to what amounts to a civilizational catastrophe, but at the time few would have predicted this would happen. In 1933, the Institute for Social Research moved briefly to Switzerland and France and then to New York in 1934, where it was loosely affiliated with Columbia University. The Frankfurt School theorists fled Germany because staying meant the imminent likelihood of death; they had already been stripped of their university posts. It was from the safety of the United States that Horkheimer formulated, with a new vigor, the concept and goals of *critical theory* (Horkheimer [1937] 1972; Dahms 2011), determined to identify the reasons that social theory, and the social sciences generally, had failed to anticipate the emergence of fascism. The task, then, became the development of a theory that could explain Nazism and contradictory human behavior or, put simply, how a society claiming to be civilized can bring out such abrupt instances of barbarism, like the extermination of various groups, including especially Jewish populations within and beyond its own borders, during the Nazi reign (Jay 1996).[17] Horkheimer was pessimistic about modern

[17] There was a second branch of critical theorists– Neumann, Gurland and Kirchheimer–who studied the political and legal system of the Nazis (see Jay 1996).

society, but not nihilistic. He believed that critical theory could be emancipatory. Today, applying a similar lens to environmental crises appears relevant.

Horkheimer and Adorno were determined to develop critical theory as an uncompromising strategy for adequately addressing–or setting the stage for addressing–the "effects of the latest mode of capitalist production" and the *collapse of reason*; this was an absolute necessity to critical theorists after the "the National Socialists' consolidation of power in Germany, the perversion of the Soviet experiment with socialism into Stalinism, and the proliferation of corporate planning in the United States" (Dahms 2011:31). In *Dialectic of Enlightenment* ([1947] 2000), Horkheimer and Adorno critiqued the Enlightenment-era philosophers and the hollow promise of progress and offered an early analysis of consumer society and anti-Semitism as empirical evidence. They contended, through their metaphorical use of the story of Odysseus, that the Enlightenment had made humans believe that their own perceived rationality was the supreme authority on truth. Humans no longer looked to religion, but to science and the pursuit of knowledge as their central, guiding power ([1947] 2002). They argued that science in the positivistic tradition was legitimated through technology and social institutions like bureaucracies that manage life (here Horkheimer and Adorno ([1947] 2002) built on Weber's conception of sociology as an interpretive discipline); "the absurdity of a state of affairs in which the power of the system over human beings increases with every step they take away from the power of nature denounces the reason of the reasonable society as obsolete (p. 30-31). In

other words, as a result of humans' legitimization of science they forget that they are merely interpreting the world around them and believe that their duty is to uncover truth. At the same time, this rationalization and legitimation process is *dialectical* because the more humans understand, the more we realize that knowledge is a myth. The result is an erosion of reason and irrationality that takes hold to an increasing extent. Out of fear, a growing numbers of individuals will accept domination and manipulation (like in the extreme case of fascism in Germany in the 1930s) because it produces a false sense of safety (an observation consistent with Freud), so that inherently irrational or anti-rational phenomena can be made to seem rational, such as the culture industry or anti-Semitism (Horkheimer and Adorno ([1947] 2002). In relation to socio-nature relationships, critical theory can illuminate rationalization and the normalization of capitalism as a process that hinders the ability to effectively address environmental crises.

One recurring and consistent theme of the early Frankfurt School is human domination of non-human nature (building on Marx) (Horkheimer 1947; Horkheimer and Adorno 1969; Marcuse 1972). The purpose of capitalism being to create surplus value, it is constantly transforming, intensifying, and expanding (O'Conner 1973; Harvey 2010; Robinson2004). One outcome of this is that "[n]ature is now a mechanical and infinitely malleable universe to be dominated for self-preservation," meaning that nature is colonized and used (and reused) in capitalist production (Gunderson 2015:229). Human "progress" therefore

depends on authority over nature, which critical theorists like Horkheimer ([1947] 1974) argued translates into the domination of other humans and one's self:

> The human being, in the process of his emancipation, shares the fate of the rest of his world. Domination of nature involves domination of man. Each subject not only has to take part in the subjugation of external nature, human and nonhuman, but in order to do so must subjugate nature in himself. Domination becomes 'internalized' for domination's sake. What is usually indicated as a goal – the happiness of the individual, health, and wealth– gains significant exclusively from its functional potentiality (p. 66).

The desire to dominate non-human nature is constantly reproduced in society. Humans internalize and normalize this domination and are unable to disentangle themselves from the very processes that that cause the problems (like environmental crises) that they hope to change.

Both Marx and Lukács were of utmost importance in guiding the Frankfurt School theorists in their conceptualization of human domination of nature. Lukács identified the process of *reification* (the English translation of *Verdinglichung* means "thing-ification," as the outcome of alienation and commodity fetishism; see Dahms 1998; Bewes 2002; Stoner 2013). Over time the process of commodity fetishism becomes increasingly complex, because successive generations of individuals are more significantly alienated. Alienation becomes second nature and each generation amplifies the "artifice" of modern society (each further removed from the world of its

predecessor; see Dahms, under contract) that perpetuates the capitalist system more or less subconsciously, and masks class relations (Lukács [1923] 1971). For example, in his essay “Society” (1965), Adorno uses the example of the transformation of class society into mass society to illustrate the process of reification. In other words, the welfare state and access to a higher standard of living impedes the ability to engage in revolutionary behavior and reflexive thinking (Cook 2011). He builds on this concept in *Negative Dialectics* (1973) by offering that he welfare state masks class relations: “in the human experience the spell is the equivalent of the fetish character of the commodity. The self-made thing becomes a thing-in-itself, from which the self cannot escape anymore” (1973: 346). In relation to environmental issues, humans can increasingly see the problems but have very few ways of conceptualizing solutions outside of capitalist ideology or market fixes that rely on the idea of economic growth.

In Horkheimer and Adorno’s “Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Destruction” ([1947] 2002), they discussed how human needs are symbolic of the dialectical paradox of modernity and depict how culture is created and perpetuated through the constant commodification of everything. In other words, what should be genuine experiences based on biological needs become complex artifacts to support the logic of capitalism over time. What is being experienced and what is thought to be experienced are two separate things. Moreover, humans must adapt to these circumstances to survive; and yet, “adaptation to the conditions that make individuals as expendable as many of the commodities

they produce or consume is reinforced by sophisticated psychotechnologies in advertising and the culture industry, and the prevailing positivist ideology, which legitimates existing conditions with its constant refrain: that is just the way things are" (Cook 2011: 98). Wheling (2002: 148) explains how "there is a causal link between mastery over nature, a state of social control and domination, and a self-repressive structure of individual identity" in Horkheimer and Adorno's work, which provide several useful insights about the society-nature link. Two relevant theorists, Postone and Habermas, follow in the Frankfurt School tradition and can provide conceptualizations useful to socio-nature relationships and the role of ideology in guiding "green" development and environmental gentrification.

Rethinking Marx

Postone (1993:33), a contemporary critical theorist but in the tradition of the first generation *Frankfurt School*, maintains that "Marx's mature social theory… is the most rigorous and sophisticated theory we have of the historical dynamics of the modern world," in his work *Time, Labor, and Social Theory.* For Postone (1993: 33), Marx's argument is based on the "growing structural contradictions between society's basic social relations (interpreted as private property and the market) and the forces of production (interpreted as the industrial mode of production)."[18] Postone reinterprets the mature work of Marx

[18] Like Durkheim, Weber, and Lukács, Postone believed that this is too simple an interpretation to describe contemporary events of that era. He acknowledged that some critical theorists

based on three criteria: the interpretation of history, the false assumption that the working class will pave the way to a new social structure, and how social theorists have interpreted Marx's analysis of production and distribution. Along such lines, Postone adds nuanced ways to re-conceptualize Marx that can be applied to the role that ideology plays in guiding development agendas, as in the case of environmental gentrification.

First, Postone (1993) argues that Marx's interpretation of the abstract value of time as a dominating force is correct, but that to understand this concept dynamically we must un-ground ourselves from our historical moment or, in other words, become self-reflexive in both thought and action. He is concerned with the tension between surface appearances and underlying forces and sees Marx's mature theory as a tool to better understand this divide, and related processes, dynamically. For Postone, Marx's argument draws attention to two issues: first, that history, not just time, but also based on time, becomes a structure of domination that must be overcome which, given the underlying structure of capitalism, is seemingly impossible because alienation is compounded across generations, "a historically dynamic process" (Postone 1993:36). In other words,

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understand the ability to be self-reflexive – to analyze one's own social context – but that thus far they have been unable to put this into practice, "they remained bound to some of the assumptions" which they are attempting to escape (Postone 1993: 35). For example, Marxist theorists are pre-occupied with the questions of whether the proletariat will rise or why it will not rise, but miss the point that this literal interpretation of Marx distracts from the fact that the idea was only symbolic of the challenge posed by capitalism, as evidenced in the bulk of his theoretical writings other than in the Manifesto.

individuals' entrenched perceptions of reality have little or nothing to do with reality; "the productive powers of capital increasingly become socially general productive powers that are historically constituted in alienated form and that no longer can be understood as those of immediate producers" (Postone 1993:42). Here Postone outlines a way to understand how the logic of capital operates.

Secondly, as capitalism constantly transforms over time and the social relationships in which workers and capitalists become deeper manifestations of alienation, the possibility for qualitative change is increasingly more daunting than the idea that workers will take back the means of production from capitalists would suggest. Therefore, the system is not so much perpetuated by actual time/capital/production incidences, but the structures born from the original capitalist division of labor and the social/psychological perceptions that this creates over and over and over; rather, "in his mature theory … Marx does not posit a historical meta-subject, such as the proletariat, which will realize itself in a future society, but provides the basis for a critique of such a notion" (Postone 1993:41). In other words, the logic of capital becomes entrenched in the psychological makeup of individuals in such an insidious way than even conceiving of qualitative change beyond the logic, itself is limited to relying on this type of logic.

Third, drawing on Horkheimer's distinction between traditional and critical theory, Postone especially critiques *traditional* Marxist theorists for failing to frame their analyses of production and distribution dynamically, due to their

emphasis on class conflict and surplus value.[19] He contended that his reinterpretation of Marx's theory "is not simply a critique of exploitation and the unequal distribution of wealth and power. Rather, it grasps modern industrial society itself as inherently capitalist, and critically analyzes capitalism primarily in terms of abstract structures of domination, increasing fragmentation of individual labor and individual existence, and a blind runaway logic" (Postone 1993:45). This conceptualization of modern society as fully capitalist shifts the focus away from the minor details of market functions and onto the larger dynamic structure that entails both micro and macro, evolutionary, and transhistorical processes which quite literally have colonized the way that humans think about and contextualize the world around them.

Habermas

Habermas, of the second generation of Frankfurt School theorists, should also be acknowledged in addition to the first generation scholars already outlined. His concept of the "life-world" and its colonization by the system (the economy and the administrative state) is particularly promising and applicable to better understanding socio-nature relationships, like the role of ideology in green development as an outcome of environmental gentrification, as he proposed that the realm of everyday, lived experiences where people find meaning (the "life-

[19] Social injustices are often studied through the lens of class conflict, but for Postone unless dynamic analyses emerge the likelihood of diminishing injustices is very small.

world") is "increasingly invaded by the overarching social system" (Bell and York 2010: 117). Moreover, Habermas (1971) posited that after World War II, the destructive effect of the economy came to be theorized from many different perspectives and, as a consequence, there is conflict over our validity claims about modern society between what we perceive is real and what actually is real, without suggesting that delineating the latter is either an easy task or even possible, but stressing the need to recognize that modern society's validity to not directly correspond with reality, but only in mediated fashion. In Habermas' (1971:71) estimation, it is important that "traditions can retain legitimizing force only as long as they are not torn out of the interpretive systems that guarantee continuity and identity." We often operate on assumptions that have no basis in any type of reality as if they were communications of communications, but are actually evidence of attempts to rationalize what is happening, usually after the fact. Evidently, there are power dynamics at play as there are often groups who are able to perpetuate their legitimacy claims more thoroughly, such as corporations. For example, we have an economic system that is supposed to generate widespread prosperity and, although this is not what is happening as exemplified by environmental injustices and privilege, we rely on a rationale that impedes our ability to discern what in fact is happening. However, it is not that there is a reality and a false reality, according to Habermas (1971;1975), but that multiple dimensions of modern society conflict with one another, especially in the context of legitimation crises.

Habermas' framework was well positioned to facilitate exploration of how ideology maintains capitalism and to illuminate human relations with the non-human environment and he has perhaps been the critical theorist most utilized in environmental sociology (and theory) by proponents and critics (Baber and Bartlett 2005; Bell and York 2010; Cook 2011; Dietz 1984; Gunderson 2014b; Nelson 2011). For example, Bell and York (2010:116) contended that Habermas "clearly recognized the ecological threats created in capitalist societies and the social challenges that accompany these threats." However, this has not been without critique (Bookchin 1982; Cook 2004, 2011; Di Norcia 1974; Gunderson 2014b; Nelson 2011; Pittman 1982; Whitebook 1979). Cook (2004:1) claims that both Adorno and Habermas share the foundational goals of the Frankfurt School, that is, "to formulate a critical theory of society that examines the impact of economic and political institutions on social life and the development of individuals." However, Habermas routinely falls back on the idea that we can somehow be emancipated through communicative action (or radical democracy). To Cook (2004: 25), although Habermas and Adorno agree on many points, Adorno is more useful to social theory because Adorno's work is still applicable over time, especially because he rejects that the economic system is subordinate to the political system;

> individuals have been integrated into the economic system to such an extent that they are incapable for the most part of even imagining a social order other than the prevailing one...Human life

> has been damaged by the incursions of the exchange principle to such an extent that communicative interaction, which Habermas' theory hinges on, is currently dictated almost exclusively by the market. (P. 24-25)

Individuals are reduced therefore to abstract and fragmented categories related to their purchasing power (Cook 2004; Adorno 1966). Habermas' theory, consequently, is frozen in time as though his analysis captures a snapshot of the period in which he was writing (at the height of the Cold War). According to critics, Habermas lacks the critical self-reflexivity so vital to the first generation Frankfurt School critical theory (Cook 2004). To Habermas (1971,1975), the life-world still serves as a potentially emancipatory place. He presupposes an intrinsic human-ness defined by the life-world and thus fails to grasp the permeating effects of the economic system to the degree that it has infiltrated all parts of human life. Despite his critics who suggest that Habermas' work is static, Habermas is nevertheless useful in understand human relations to the non-human environment (Gunderson 2014b).

Critical Theory and Environmental Sociology

Stoner (2013a) relies on the tradition of the Frankfurt School critical theory to examine values-based and Marxist-oriented approaches in environmental sociology, and to better understand the paradox of how "the role of modern society in perpetuating environmental problems is becoming increasingly visible,

yet less and less understandable" (p. 2). Stoner (2013a, 2013b) advances the concept of *sociobiophysicality* as a means to capture the dynamic nature of humans' relationship to the environment. Building on the work of Biro (2005), Stoner asks how environmental destruction can be accelerating even though humans are more aware and concerned with the problems that they see than ever before. He argues that this paradox is "a result of alienation and reification as key processes of mediation constituted by the capitalist mode of production. In addition to estranging humans from self, nature, others, and consciousness, alienation simultaneously rewrites reality so as to inhibit these very same humans from consciously recognizing that this is happening" (Stoner 2013a:21). A key point in Stoner's (2013a) work – building on Lukács – is that economic phenomena are "thorough[ly] social" and in this way cannot be thought of as separate from the social world, as traditional Marxists seem to imply (p. 23). In other words, there is no way to overcome or overwrite the economic system unless we understand the permeating ideology of capitalism and how it influences and shapes who we are and how we think. In his work, Stoner (2013a) refers to the Cold War era to describe how this particular socio-historic moment in the mid-to-late-twentieth century influenced the environmental movement and disciplines like environmental sociology, which became "mediated by critique containment" (p. 6). He also argues "US environmental sociology requires a more thorough understanding of its own historicity, including an awareness of its own immersion in the constellation of social forces which effectively operate in and

through not only the biophysical, or so-called ‘external nature’, but the human body/consciousness, or so-called ‘internal nature’, as well” (2013b, p. 623). Above all, the motivation behind Stoner’s work, which is to criticize both treadmill of production theory and reflexive modernization theory, is to promote a paradigm presumably more effective at addressing a range of issues that to date has been neglected, especially as they pertain to the contradictory nature of modern society. This analysis lays out the usefulness of critical theory when examining socio-nature relationships.

Stoner and Melanthoupolos argue in *Freedom in the Anthropocene: Twentieth Century Helplessness in the Face of Climate Change* (2015) that the current ecological crises that humans (and other bio-systems) face is related to the ideological forces of capitalism and not only humans inability to reduce environmental threats and degradation adequately, but their failure to understand what prevents them from doing so. Here they specifically build on the work of Lukács, Adorno, and Postone to highlight how the concept of the *Anthropocene*–the proposed era which begins when human technology began to have significant impact on global ecosystems–merely reflects humans’ helplessness in light of the conditions that they have created through the Industrial Revolution and its expanding technology and subsequent toxic streams of waste.

Like Stoner, Gunderson (2015 a, 2015b) seeks to problematize environmental sociology’s neglect of critical theory. In his work he argues that critical theory can and should be used in environmental sociology to conceptually

inform sociological examinations of society-environmental debates. He discusses (2015a) how Horkheimer, Adorno, and Marcuse link the domination of human beings to the domination of nature and include not only a materialist analysis that looks at structural conditions, but also at the psychological and cultural forces that maintain these structures. In his work, Gunderson uses two examples to highlight critical theory and socio-nature interactions. First, he (2013, 2015a) examines the notion of *ethical consumerism* using critical theory by analyzing alternative markets and "ethical" commodities and argues that contrary to studies that claim ethical consumerism plays a role in "dismantling the ideological structure of commodity fetishism" in actuality "ethical consumerism...acts as a new layer of commodity fetishism that masks the harms of capitalism by convincing society that the harms of capitalism can be rehabilitated with the commodity itself" (2013: 110). Furthermore, relying on the work of Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, and Fromm he posits that "ethical consumerism is better understood as a form of mystification in which commodities are granted supra-sensible powers that can supposedly create progressive change in the market system, thereby preserving capitalism rather than challenging it" (2013: 110). Gunderson applies critical theory to this empirical example to illustrate the usefulness of Frankfurt School theorists. Gunderson's understanding of critical theory in this way is applicable to "green" development and environmental gentrification.

Second, Gunderson (2014, 2015b) looks at the *animal question* using critical theory. The animal question refers to the domination and exploitation of non-human animals by humans as a symbol of how humans dominate each other and nature. Gunderson makes the statement that the Frankfurt School first "theorized and problematized society's troubling relationship with animals...For early critical theory, society's relationship with the animal embodied the human irrationality produced by unconstrained instrumental reason" (2014: 1-2). He argues that the exploitation of non-human animals is not critically examined in our society and instead is routinely normalized, for instance, Horkheimer uses the example of circus animals made to perform for humans (Horkheimer 1978). Adorno equates the domestication and servitude forced on non-human animals as a similar phenomenon to the subjugation of certain people through, for example, racism and anti-Semitism (Gunderson 2014). Here Gunderson applies critical theory to empirical cases using historical methods.

Another recent empirical study in environmental sociology uses critical theory. Bell and York (2010) are particularly interested in exploring how ideology manipulation suppresses radical activism in West Virginia as an example of a much larger phenomenon. Referring to Lukács' discussion of reification, Gramsci's notion of cultural hegemony, Horkheimer's concept of modern society, and Adorno's work on the culture industry, the authors developed a case for Habermas' work (as a second generation Frankfurt School critical theorist) on "the process by which social systems are legitimized" and the "colonization of the

‘lifeworld’ ” (Bell and York 2010:117). They use the example of the *Friends of Coal* campaign in West Virginia, maintaining that the perpetuation of an economic identity in West Virginia ultimately creates an atmosphere in which, even if a person disagrees with the rhetoric promoted by the coal companies, there is no space for her or him to do so. Ultimately, this campaign and emphasis on economic identify masks the treadmill of production and the process of increased capital accumulation, exacerbates ecological devastation, and decreases employment. In their analysis of “Friends of Coal,” Bell and York (2010: 99-100) built upon the work of Adorno, for whom “needs are a conglomerate of the true and the false.” In Adorno’s view, to begin to understand dialectics one must be able to fathom that our concept of society is not really what society is, creating a clash of cognition from which critical theory stems, but that conflict must be experienced and worked through for theory to continue. Adorno’s (1974) dialectical approach is a crucial step for escaping the artifice of modernity (Dahms, under contract):

> In the end, hope, wrested from reality by negating it, is the only form in which truth appears. Without hope, the idea of truth would be scarcely even thinkable, and it is the cardinal untruth, having recognized existence to be bad, to present it as truth simply because it has been recognized”. Negative dialectics is the way that he explains his understanding of dynamic thinking, and this provides a conceptual framework for other theorists to work with. (Adorno 1974, p. 98)

Adorno ([1966] 1973) admonished the simplicity of blaming one entity for social problems, and instead argues that what is necessary to grapple with the complex nature of modernity and our place in it (both in the past, now, and in the future) is a dynamic way of conceptualizing modern society that combines empirical research and critical theory.

Biro (2005, 2011) reconsiders the role that Frankfurt School theorists can have on reformulating socio-nature relationships. He argues that Adorno's and Marcuse's works, specifically building off of Marx's concept of alienation, are the most useful starting point to understand humans' relationship with the nonhuman world (Biro 2005). Humans' domination over nature is reproduced in their domination over one another and exemplified by inequality and social hierarchies (like class stratification and environmental privilege). There are two types of alienation that Biro distinguishes, basic and surplus. Basic alienation creates the conditions in which humans develop culture and basic social institutions. Surplus alienation, or the impetus to dominate nature, normalizes and reifies, over time, social domination. Early enlightenment thinkers like Rousseau and positivists scientists believed that domination over nature led to human progress. To Biro (2005, 2011), Marx, Adorno, and Marcuse, pointed out that this was not necessarily the case and that progress is relative and not guaranteed.

In *Ecocritique: Contesting the Politics of Nature, Economy, and Culture* (1997), Luke used several ecological movements and environmental groups to highlight the ways in which these groups (e.g. deep ecologists, the Nature

Conservancy, proponents of *green consumerism*, and social ecologists) fail to understand how their causes and beliefs are embedded in the "totality of all human/machine, human/animal, human/plant interactivities as power/knowledge relations" (p. *xvi).* He made the claim that there are conceptual contradictions throughout the various ecological movements, for example, "If the economy, ideology, and technology of corporate consumerism are to change, then one must ask: Who dominates whom? How? Why? Where? What is to be done? Deep ecology does not address these questions of provide any adequate answers..." (1997:25). He proposes that the Frankfurt School tradition is a useful means for examining the lack of reflexivity within environmental and ecologically oriented groups, a form of analysis useful for this project.

Wheling (2002:145) suggested about critical theory that "there has been no empirical research into environmental issues within this tradition." Stoner and Melanthopoulos (2015), Gunderson (2014, 2015), Bell and York (2010), Biro (2011), and Luke (1997) offer historical research and theoretical conceptualizations to link empirical environmental cases with Frankfurt School critical theory. In this project, I see my work as a part of an effort to engender a new kind of environmental sociology of late capitalism in the twenty-first century, by building on existing theoretical paradigms like political economy of the environment and environmental sociology, while also being critical of these established paradigms, and relying to a great extent on critical theory. Through ethnographic work, I seek to conceptualize the ways in which alienation

(reification/domination) is part of our everyday experiences and becomes the lens through which we decipher the world around us. Employing a case study of environmental gentrification, I endeavor to highlight this phenomenon and also to contribute to the existing subfield of environmental sociology, by following critical theory as a theoretical and methodological guide to better understand the process of environmental and rural gentrification in a rural Appalachian community.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODS

The qualitative research design for this study was devised to focus on deep analysis and description. The initial purpose was to develop a better understanding of social change in a rural Appalachian community. Preliminary archival research and pilot interviews raised the question of whether environmental and rural gentrification were likely occurring in this area. The community had numerous development projects that drastically changed the town center between 2000 and 2014, and many residents described the influx of newcomers as being significantly related to these changes regardless of whether they saw the changes as beneficial, detrimental, or neutral. They also said that land prices were much higher and had risen quickly when compared to surrounding communities with similar characteristics; some residents used the term “gentrification” to describe the changes in their community.

Field research was conducted over a twelve-month period using participant observation that included visits of up to three-week periods at a time to the case site, historical research, and open-ended interviews to develop a better understanding of the changes experienced by this community. The exact location of the case study is not disclosed in order to preserve the anonymity of the participants.

Case Site and Ethnography

Over the past few years the case site, designated as "Cadensview," has been featured in several major U.S. newspapers and magazines as a travel destination. Cadensview has appeared in multiple blogs, regional newspapers, and websites as a great place to live and popular tourist attraction. The community has also been made part of a regional heritage music trail, is the site of two large festivals, and most recently has become a destination for filmmakers. Cadensview is a small town that serves as the center of a rural county, which also contains several smaller unincorporated communities with their own post-offices. Cadensview and the surrounding county have a relatively small population and have experienced steady population growth since 1980 (U.S. Census Bureau 2010) (Table 1).[20] This population growth appears to be significant for a rural community in this region, especially given that many nearby communities have experienced significant population decline over the past several decades (U.S. Census Bureau 2014). [21] Migrants to Cadensview are predominately retirees, artists/crafters, self-identified entrepreneurs, and remote

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[20] Population statistics for this study are based on data compiled by the U.S. Census Bureau and the state population research center, however, to protect the identities of participants in this study I have not included place specific citations in the bibliography. If there are questions regarding this information please contact the author.

[21] Also important to note here is that this community is relatively close to a major university and that a few citizens voiced the concern that Cadensview could potentially become a bedroom community to faculty members and others associated with the school, however, in my archival research and through my participant observation and interviews I found few individuals who had arrived to the community because of ties to the university.

Table 1

Cadensview Population Growth 1970-2010

Cadensview Population Growth 1970-2010 (based on U.S. Census Data)	
1970-1980	>18%
1980-1990	>3%
1990-2000	>15%
2000-2010	>10%

workers.[22] The 2014 population is over 96.0% white, almost 2% black, less than 1% Asian, Native American, or other, and about 2.5% Hispanic or Latino (U.S. Census Bureau 2014).

Although back-to-the-lander newcomers began arriving to Cadensview in the 1970s few major changes took place save for the establishment of several isolated intentional communities or communes and the creation of a health food store in the town center. Since 2000, however, there have been a series of changes in the community and major developments, primarily led by wealthy residents, many of whom are newcomers, through non-profit work and private investment. The establishment of commercial and non-profit initiatives as well as planning bodies include the following: a new town park and walking path; two new locally-owned hotels with one designated as a green/sustainable hotel; several revitalized buildings in the main town, including some built to LEED-standards; a farmers' market; an economic development authority, planning commission, land policy task force, and agricultural and forestry task force: two ecologically-focused community based organizations (CBOs) and one cultural-heritage CBO; an arts center; at least eight new organic farms in addition to the five or so established in the 1990s; six new locally-owned restaurants and food trucks; several new shops: two large nationally recognized festivals and a few smaller, regionally and locally known festivals; a distillery; music venues; a

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[22] In comparison to other counties in the state, Cadensview has had a .2% Hispanic population growth rate, which is much lower than surrounding communities.

proposed brewery; an arts/crafts driving tour; and a real-estate boom that was only minimally affected by the 2008 recession according to the relators interviewed for this study and property records.

In 2005, a local citizens group with non-profit status, the Cadensview Research Organization (CRO) created and administered a community survey in Cadensview with the help of faculty from a nearby university. Over 1,000 surveys were sent by mail and obtained a 57% response rate. Of the respondents, 42% were native to the community (born there or had lived there for over 40 years), whereas 58% had moved there and were considered newcomers (26% lived in the county 10 years or less; 32% 11-30 years; 42% 30 years or more). A further 15% of respondents moved there because they were motivated by the back-to-the-land movement. The racial and ethnic background of respondents mirrored the community's population. The survey included questions about changes in the county, what should be preserved, economic development, recreation and community services, public education, arts and leisure, health care, employment and work, sense of community, and environment and land use.[23] The citizen group, largely composed of newcomers, that helped design and implement the survey outlined the goals of the survey as follows: the desire to understand the complex of issues and needs in Cadensview, especially given that the "community is changing rapidly, and with change, comes the opportunity and responsibility to make important choices – with the goal of sustaining and

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[23] This survey is excluded from bibliography because of its place identifying characteristics.

improving the quality of life for community residents." The 2005 survey was also used in guiding the community's strategic plan implemented a few years later.

Data from the community survey suggested that the most frequently mentioned concerns among respondents could be categorized into three groupings: first, and most prominent, were fears that "new people moving in implies higher land prices, taking jobs, bringing 'outside' attitudes, changing Cadensview"; second was the "need for control of specific things (trailer parks, developments, a specific business activity, franchise/chain businesses, junk vehicles on hilltops, etc.)"; third was concern about "jobs and employment opportunities" in Cadensview. These results demonstrate that there are at least perceptions among citizens that the community is changing because of the influx of newcomers to the area. The findings also suggested that when compared to residents who were born and raised in Cadensview, those who moved to the area had higher levels of education and expressed more civic engagement, had significantly more favorable attitudes towards the arts and tourism; they also exhibited the most positive views toward the environment compared.

This community survey systematically categorized citizen opinions and was very useful in determining that there are concerns about community change, land use, and the local economy in Cadensview. There was consensus among respondents regarding the protection of farmland (76%), preserving the rural character of the community (68%), keeping out subdivisions (63%), understanding the limits of water supply (81%), and maintaining agriculture as a

key feature in the community (83%). There was also strong support (75%) for biking or hiking trails, if accomplished without local tax expense. However, the survey also found that the longer a resident had lived in Cadensview, the less likely she or he was to support land use and growth regulations, and the more likely to support business development. Over 75% of respondents agreed that the community needed new business development. Respondents believed that the following would most benefit the economy: small businesses (80%), light industry (61%), technology-based businesses (55%), tourism (49%), and heavy industry (23%). About half of the respondents were not opposed to seeing more franchise or chain outlets coming to Cadensview.

Aside from the valuable findings of this survey, three other observations were made based on a review of the results: almost 60% of respondents were classified as newcomers, the only indicator of socioeconomic class was level of education, and there were 159 written-in comments from 110 surveys many of which specifically noted the roles that newcomers play in shaping development in Cadensview.[24] Although these write-in comments were in no way representative of the total respondents and may represent some extreme or outlier opinions, they are interesting nonetheless and offer many insights about perceptions of community changes in Cadensview, especially regarding environmental and rural gentrification.

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[24] Of the respondents who contributed written-in answers about 39% were old-timers/natives to the county (meaning born there or lived >40 years), about 18% were newcomers who had lived there between 21-40 years, and 43% were from newcomers who had lived there 0-20 years.

Ethnographic work allows the researcher to develop a holistic account of the social world by analyzing the everyday interactions of individuals and groups. There are a variety of methods used in ethnography including participant observation, historical/archival work, and interviewing. Participant observation gives researchers insight into complex social relationships and patterns of interaction (Luker 2008). In this study, participant observation took place during various meetings, panel discussions, and presentations hosted by community-building organizations, at local government meetings, and at a variety of community events such as farmers' markets, concerts, church gatherings, and wine tastings. Extensive field notes were gathered during these events to describe the people, places, events, casual conversations, impromptu interviews, and personal reflections and reminders. A review of these notes from the first few weeks in the field helped guide directions for further research and interviews. The majority of meetings were open to the public, and very few people seemed to notice or care what I was doing; sometimes the note taking led to conversation, which provided entry in to the community. These various events helped me to connect with members of the community, learn about future similar events, and to set up interviews. After attending several public events in the community and connecting with individual residents, I was invited to private functions where I was able to develop a better sense of who was guiding development work and how the bureaucratic processes worked. These events, which included an eight-hour tourism development workshop, a high school reunion, a family reunion, a

funeral, a gallery opening, a few dinner parties, and a panel discussion, allowed me to develop a better sense of how community members were experiencing and reacting to social change.

The local library was a source for archival work because it had a very useful archives room with newspaper reels, genealogy records, church records, books, maps, and other regional and local texts. In addition, the county government website posted the minutes from public meetings in addition to information from various CBO websites when available. Websites run by CBOs tended to be up-to-date, aesthetically pleasing, and easy to navigate, but the local government website was outdated and less informative. In addition to data gathered from these websites, I had a two-year subscription to the local weekly newspaper, which provided leads for possible research directions and allowed me to glean information from stories on community development, new businesses, property transfers, and sale postings for land and homes. Finally, I used real estate websites such as Zillow, Realtor.com, and the websites of local realtors to triangulate data that came from my research participants about property transfers.

Over a one-year period I completed forty-seven, semi-structured interviews. These interviews were conducted for at least one and a half hours and digitally recorded; some interviews were as long as four hours. An interview guide ensured consistency across interviews, but participants were encouraged to bring up other topics as they saw fit (Appendix A). Most participants answered

the questions, almost in order, without being asked directly; however, the list was useful for keeping the interview on track and focused. All participants were informed about consent procedures and told that their participation was voluntary, that they could refuse to answer any questions, and that I only share what they have said with their permission. Early archival research and participant observation helped to identify individuals for interview, yielding an initial list of ten individuals who were contacted via local telephone directory, personal connections, and business/personal websites. Of these initial contacts, four people responded affirmatively that they would like to be interviewed. During these first few pilot interviews, I asked participants about anyone who might participate and for advice on the interview questions. Their critiques and observations were used in the final version of the question list. Next, I used the snowball sampling method to contact other possible participants (Noy 2008). Research participants were very open, and they were generous with their time. The majority of the interviews were in participants' homes, which allowed a glimpse into their personal lives. However, interviews were also conducted at restaurants, the local coffee shop, the local park, at participants' businesses, and the local library.

Interviews are a powerful tool for qualitative researchers (Fetterman 2010; Luker 2008). Interviewees can provide a lens with which we can better understand participants' perceptions of experiences, their assumptions, and to find common themes in the mental maps that they construct (Fetterman 2010;

Kleinman 1996; Luker 2008; Warren 2002; Swidler 1986). During an interview, participants generally construct rich, dense, and thoughtful narratives about the past and present, and their narratives help the researcher understand the participants' worldview. The purpose of interviews in this project was to reveal the ways in which respondents experience and understand their community and the meanings that they attach these understandings.

Access to populations is often a major obstacle for researchers (Bourgois 2003; Duneier 1999; Ho 2009). In this case, being from the region allowed me access to research participants that I may not have had otherwise because I was already an *insider*. A handful of people that I already knew or knew of were able to connect me to various participants, or at least provide name recognition to gain entry to particular events or secure an interview. Often an individual was encouraged to participate in an interview or seemed more willing to trust me because of my familiarity with a person she or he knew. My shared cultural understandings and knowledge about the local geography and history also made it easier to establish mutual respect. At the same time, this familiarity may have meant that I overlooked certain phenomena or details. For example, I realized about six months into the study that I had failed to take any pictures; I was so used to seeing the area that I did not immediately notice things that an outsider might find useful to photograph. In addition, it is important to acknowledge because my personal observations and experiences led me to this study

because I am from this region, I strove to be mindful of my role as a researcher when establishing relationships with the research participants (Presser 2004).

One successful tactic to get people to participate in interviews was to approach them at community meetings or events. In several instances a person I chatted with at an event or meeting agreed to be interviewed. Luck also played a major part in locating potential interviewees. For example, I was taking pictures of an abandoned sewing factory behind a small grocery store when a sports utility vehicle pulled in to the deserted parking; its occupants sought a shady spot under which to eat their lunch. I had to walk back past vehicle to get to my car and in doing so the woman and teenager inside smiled amicably. I stopped and asked them if they knew much about the building or its history. In fact, they thought I was a real estate agent scoping out the property to buy or sell. I introduced myself and explained the project. While they drank from large Styrofoam cups and I leaned against the passenger side door of their vehicle, we talked for over an hour. The woman was a retired government worker who had lived in the community her whole life. Not only did she invite me to her home the following week for a more formal interview, she invited me to a high school reunion and served as a gatekeeper to the small and tight-knit African American community in Cadensview. She provided the addresses of several old-timers who had worked at that abandoned sewing factory; some had no phone, but she recommended that I simply walk up to their front doors and knock because they "loved to talk."

A large quantity of ethnographic work deals with *studying down,* a situation in which the researcher has more power than the research participant (Nader 1972). In such cases, those being researched often do not have the privilege to refuse being researched. However, studying down can also help illuminate forms of oppression or bring a voice to those being oppressed (Petras and Porpora 1993; Piven and Cloward 1977). When I interacted with individuals who were less fortunate than myself, I downplayed the privileged credentials that I have – primarily education – and focused on what we had in common. For example, I discussed my connections to the area and commonalities based on a childhood rooted in a lower-middle-income household and the understanding that comes from having a family member lose a job due to economic restructuring, living paycheck-to-paycheck, and moving frequently from rental home to rental home. Those participants who had similar experiences tended to have the least amount of time for interviews because of their work schedules and thus we squeezed time in between their multiple jobs and often at odd hours of the day or evening.

In contrast to studying down is the process of *studying up*, examining non-marginalized groups to develop a better sense of the ways in which power is exercised (Kleinman 1996; Ho 2009). Many participants in this study were considerably privileged and had educational backgrounds equal to, or much more prestigious than, my own. These individuals were all United States' citizens, largely from white, Judeo-Christian, and professional backgrounds.

Many of these individuals that I interviewed considered themselves to be politically progressive and engaged with environmental and social issues. Power-structures were not always obvious based simply on the conversations I had with participants and there was a great deal of reading between the lines on my part to understand both what was said and was not said during interviews (Olesen and Whittaker 1968; Kleinman 1996). Kleinman (1996:10) noted “a patterned silence, while sometimes hard to notice, has as much significant as repetitive noise.” Moreover, many of the participants in this study based their identities on rejecting their privileged backgrounds and readily discussed the moment when they had made a choice to cut ties to materialism, drop-out of the *corporate world*, or had decided to live a *mindful, intentional,* or *sustainable* lifestyle. At times during these interviews I was jokingly chided for taking part in the system by continuing my education. Paradoxically, names were dropped frequently during interviews, usually with a preface including a prestigious title or degree, such as when Glenda, 63, said, “You’ve got to talk to Mitchell, he graduated from so-and-so and was a hot-shot lawyer before moving here to be a farmer,” or when Mary, 36, said, “You’ll love Barbara, she got her Ph.D. from so-and-so and worked at so-and-so before realizing what bullshit she was contributing to and then she moved here to teach Montessori school.” During interviews, some of the participants volunteered that their privilege had been a catalyst for providing their current lifestyle, like an inheritance to buy property or to start a business, because there were few concerns over what would happen if they failed. The

same individuals often readily acknowledged their privilege, including their wealth, in detail and said that it propelled them to give back to the community. Many participants were open and candid about their backgrounds, but most ignored their own set of privileges and seemed unwilling to discuss and downplayed their social, economic, or educational advantages– such as telling me how they rejected attending college, going to grad school, or taking over the family business, or how they had turned down a high paying job– and focused instead on how their own hard work, sweat equity, and how a mix of wise and fortuitous business decisions brought them their current success. They also focused on how living outside of Cadensview in other parts of the country or world or traveling extensively gave them a deep appreciation for the community and knowledge about how to make it better.

For this study, I interviewed county and town commissioners and other elected or appointed officials, members of the Chamber of Commerce, business and community leaders, self-identified entrepreneurs, farmers, property-owners, and renters. Among these were residents who considered themselves old-timers or locals and others who considered themselves newcomers or transplants. Because the categories of “newcomer” and “old-timer” are somewhat messy and promote a false binary, I encouraged participants to self-identify. The individuals who had moved to the community as adults, especially if they identified culturally with the alternative folks (also known as hippies, back-to-the-landers, or homesteaders within this community) tended to hesitate to identify as locals or

old-timers, even if they had lived there for thirty or more years. Residents who were born in the community and had lived there their whole lives were more open about these categories, making comments like those voiced by Travis, 35: “If you pay taxes here you’re just as local as I am.” Participants identified themselves as follows: twenty-three individuals identified as newcomers or transplants, meaning they had moved to the county from somewhere else, although a few had lived there for over forty years; twenty-one identified as old-timers or locals, meaning they were born and raised in the community; three individuals had parents who were newcomers, but themselves had been born and raised in the community. This last group did not identify as newcomers, but were quick to note that they had never felt completely accepted by the locals. The clearest distinction between groups of individuals was based on cultural perceptions: the “hippies/transplants/alternatives” and the “old-timers/locals/natives.”

After completing each interview, I transcribed the audio recording and coded the data, then worked through the data line-by-line and identified words or phrases that seemed important. Coding qualitative research is the process of thematically categorizing data, trying to understand how the categories fit together in a conceptual whole, and finally developing conclusions based on these implications. In other words, coding is a way to interrogate one’s data systematically. Coffey and Atkinson (1996) suggested that qualitative coding proceeds via three basic procedures: “(a) noticing relevant phenomena, (b) collecting examples of those phenomena, and (c) analyzing those phenomena in

order to find commonalities, differences, patterns, and structures" (p. 129). The value of this process was noted by Luker (2008), who explained that "when you hear the same thing from people all over the country who don't know one another, you can be reasonable sure that you are tapping into something that is reliably *social* and not just individual" (p. 166). Common themes emerged during the coding process across interviews, and I used these themes to generate ideas and identify important concepts (Luker 2008:166).

Sociology, at its best, is an endeavor to better understand modern society while recognizing the limits of our knowledge due to the historical moment in which we live. As social scientists, we can and should study human interpretations about social actions within a cultural and historical framework. In this way, the discipline can have a liberating quality because of its ability to recognize its own limitations (Petras and Porpora 1993).

Critical Theory as Method

Critical theory is perhaps best understood as a form of radical basic research (Dahms 2014). If the goal is a non-positivist form of research as it was conceived of by the classics, then the critical theory of the Frankfurt School is the most explicitly developed and advanced approach to identifying the necessary preconditions for social research that illuminates rather than perpetuates the contradictory functioning of modern society. Critical theory as a research method of sorts, and a set of analytical tools, allows for studying levels of social

integration that correspond with particular modes of behavior, which in turn feed back into the institutions of society (in ways that individuals in everyday life typically are not capable of seeing) (Morrow 1994; Strydom 2011). If we apply Frankfurt School theories to the study of society and human relations, to the non-human world, we bring about a new way to look at social phenomena. As critical theorists suggested, we should not presume that we are well positioned to take on the challenge of studying society without first acknowledging how society shapes and influences our actions and ways of relating to reality, and our ability to illuminate the *modern* condition, in particular. Horkheimer believed that social scientists had the responsibility to consider how concrete socio-historical circumstances influence efforts to examine illuminate those circumstances (Horkheimer [1937] 1972; Dahms 2011, esp. Ch. 6). If we fail to recognize the limits of our own knowledge and research, as they are related to the specific socio-historical circumstances of which we are parts, we are likely to unknowingly contribute to the very problems we seek to change or illuminate. In the absence of the kind of critical-theoretical reflexivity Horkheimer advocated, studying society beyond the particular configuration of a given society is impossible, or at least incomplete, if one does not have the capacity to situate oneself historically, geographically, and institutionally, as part of a larger, and sometimes capricious, whole (Postone 1993). Without the determination to perceive the linkages between transformative processes and historical moments, scholars are in danger of becoming trapped in surface level quandaries and static analysis.

Critical theorists importantly emphasized that social theory cannot simply focus on one perception of reality but must be able to move across time, both forward and backward, with space or risk becoming the very mode of analysis that it criticizes because "the critical theory approach…recognizes the necessary entwinement of history and knowledge and emphasizes the limitations the former places on the later. It sees the socio-historical object of sociological analysis, namely modern society, as inseparable from the socio-historical reality of the researcher's milieu, which in turn defines the reality perceived" (Stoner 2013: 19; see also Horkheimer [1937] 1972). A necessary part of critical theory, then, is that the theorist constantly tries to understand the whole from a part's perspective, while realizing the limitations to doing so. The central purpose of critical theory was, therefore, to build a theoretical *and* methodological foundation for being able to recognize not just the dialectic processes that are prevalent in society today, but how these processes prevent us from seeing how they function.

In this study, I oriented my work toward the Frankfurt School theorists both in how they conceived of modern society and how they envisioned studying social life. I combine this theoretical and methodological orientation with qualitative research methods to illuminate the ways in which community members at my case site understand and relate to social changes around them. Because this is an interpretative study, I have tried to represent the research participants and their beliefs as accurately as possible. Some of the research

participants shared paternalistic and classist sentiments with me and were at times racist and sexist. At the same time, they were honest about their thoughts, experiences, and opinions and often showed deep concern for others, their community, and the natural environment. I have had to choose carefully what to include and what to exclude. Participants seemed to sincerely care about their community, and yet their belief systems and actions reinforced the very social, political, and economic structures that produces and reproduces that which they seek to change. These paradoxes clearly point to the cognitive dissonance that modern society exacerbates and to multifaceted power arrangements in a globalized world. During interviews, as I took notes and recorded conversations to be transcribed, I realized that all the participants in this study spent time reflecting on their role in the community and seemed open to making connections between their individual lives and the world around them. I hope that the result of this project will inspire more and deeper reflection – and perhaps reflexivity, as well.

CHAPTER IV

COMMUNITY CHANGE IN CADENSVIEW: SITUATING THE LOCAL IN THE GLOBAL

During the collection of data for this study, old-timers in Cadensview noted two major sources of change in their community. First, economic restructuring: Cadensview, like other parts of Appalachia and rural America, experienced deindustrialization and the mechanization of agriculture beginning in the 1970s. As a result many individuals had to permanently leave the community to find work. These local changes are tied to economic restructuring because companies relocated manufacturing facilities outside of the United States to countries where employees could be paid less and there were more lenient labor and environmental laws. Second, the arrival of *alternative* newcomers: initially during the back-to-the-land movement in the 1970s-1980s, and then with the influx of a more affluent group of in-migrants in the 1990s and 2000s.

Eighty-six year old Agnes and her husband sold over 300 acres of their land in 1972. We were sitting in the kitchen of her modest brick home and her daughter, who was visiting from out of town, served me lemonade and helped translate to Agnes if she could not hear my questions. Agnes was born and raised in a small unincorporated community outside of Cadensview and remembers selling the family farm to “the hippies, who’d pay a lot more than anybody around here” was a way for her and her family to make ends meet. Her husband advertised the property in an out of state newspaper, hoping to attract

more money for the land than they would in the local community and, as Agnes said, “it worked.” As a young adult she worked in a sewing factory in a nearby town, “even after I had kids, I had to.” When the sewing factory shut down she said she was “lucky to become certified to work in the healthcare industry” where she worked until she retired. She said she has seen many of her neighbors, friends, and even her children “leave the mountains to find work.” Agnes, like many of the other self-identified old-timer participants in this study discussed the different types of impact that deindustrialization had on their lives and remembered clearly when the factories began shutting down (Figure 3).

Lorraine, like Agnes, grew up on a farm in the county and remembers that

> When I was growing up if you heard someone's last name you knew what area of the county they were from. Just follow the name: Jones or Smiths or Johnsons and you’d know where someone came from and who their family was. I was a Smith, people knew I was from over in Iron Valley.
> When I was a kid growing up there were three high schools and we were all great rivals, we just hated each other. But then we were consolidated in one school...
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> I was the first person in my family to go to college. My mother finished high school and had always wanted to be a teacher but it was not within an economic possibility. My father had quit school in eighth grade. And so my going to college was always important to them.
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> When I was a child my father worked for the railroad, but he was not able to advance even though he was a very talented mechanic because he did not have any education.

Figure 3

An abandoned garment factory in Cadensview

> He did carpentry work. He had to travel a lot to find work. You really had to leave here to making decent money doing things. He'd be gone from home for two or three weeks. He got to come home though. Now when my students graduate high school they basically have to leave the county to find work.

Lorraine's narrative, like Agnes', suggests the impact that deindustrialization and the consolidation of schools had on her life and on the community. She felt very lucky to have been able to attend college and then become employed as a teacher in Cadensview. She told me that very few people of her generation were able to attend college. These women's stories illuminate how this small community is linked to larger global economic processes.

Eighty-three year old Joan had similar stories as Lorraine and Agnes. A long time worker in a garment factory, she had few options when he factory closed down. She said

> work was tough to find if you'd been in the factories all them years. There wasn't much I could do after I lost my job. You just find things to do. I took in sewing jobs. I drove over to Morningsville and worked at K-Mart for a while…I must have been in my late fifties then. It were hard to hold on to your land if you had any. People sold. They moved away.

Based on participant responses during interviews, women like Joan and Agnes primarily did factory work in this community, whereas men's jobs were deeply impacted by the mechanization of agriculture and the move in the United States toward large-scale industrial farming.

A long-time farmer, eighty-five year old Harvey said “a lot of people did move away. My two brothers moved away, my wife’s sister. Lots of friends, neighbors, people I went to high-school with.” Harvey also told me how each small-unincorporated community throughout Cadensview had had its own post office and store that served as local meeting places in addition to providing services the local residents. Each small community also had its own school, usually a one or two room school building with one teacher. During his lifetime most all of these stores, post-offices, and schools shut down (Figure 4). There were at least fourteen of these smaller communities in Cadensview County until the 1960s or so, although some of the smallest schools had closed in decades prior.

Today in Cadensview County there are three smaller communities with their own post-offices and convenience stores outside of the Cadensview town proper. Like other old-timers, Harvey found it peculiar when I said he was from Cadensview. He told me that he was from Iron Valley, his mom was from Cougar Hill and his father had grown up in between these two places near Smith’s Mill. He said when he was a child, Cadensview was the “big town” and that they might go in on a Saturday to the movie theater or skating rink (both of which have since closed down), but it was not his home. Other old-timer interviewees shared similar stories.

Figure 4

The site of a former store that once served as a central hub for people in this rural neighborhood, Cougar Hill

Agnes recalled growing up in Cougar Hill and when the telephone company first put a phone line in during the late 1940s. She said it was a community line and “you never knew which neighbor was listening in.” Cougar Hill’s residents did not get electricity until 1952. Lorriane told me that she thought people stopped identifying with these smaller communities like Cougar Hill after the schools were consolidated, people starting having cars routinely, and the stores starting closing up all around the county, “that’s when fewer and fewer people seemed to associate with those very small communities like where my father grew up.” Lorraine mentioned that when she was growing up the small stores had served as important places for the local people to meet to gossip, sell things, buy things, and see each other. She also said that many of the newcomers assumed she was from Cadensview without differentiating between different parts of the county. She declared that now people say “you are either from Cadensview or the county, but no one calls you from Iron Valley, Reece’s Ridge, Shuttle’s Holler, Smith’s Hill, or so on.” These stories by old-timers in Cadensview show the ways in which the community changed over time. The abandoned physical structures like the boarded up stores and factories are symbolic of the multiple ways in which globalization has had an impact in the community.

Ephraim and Lola, were born and raised in Cadensview, but moved away in the early 1960s to find work. They are both in their mid-seventies and expressed sadness over having to raise their children in a city and being away

from their families. Ephraim said, “As soon as we retired we moved home. We couldn’t wait.” Sitting on their front porch on a foggy June morning, Lola told me that they were thrilled to be home and had moved in to Ephraim’s family’s home place, something they were very fortunate to have. She offered me a cup of tea and a piece of pre-packaged pastry from a metal and plastic container. Later I found out that they were on a fixed income and food items were carefully budgeted each week. Lola told me regrettably that her family’s 300-acre farm had been sold and then subdivided. She said her parents had not wanted to sell and that she and Ephraim would have liked to buy them out, but they could not afford to and her parents’ health was failing. Even more, the realtor promised them that the land would be kept as a farm but within a year a developer had already divided it in to small plots. She said she could not even bear to drive by where she grew up because she experiences too much grief.

Georgette, a sixty-year-old woman who was born and raised in the community and works now as government official lamented to me over losing her family’s land. A federal judge a few states away purchased it as a vacation property. She told me her parents had not been in a financial position to buy it and she was too young at the time. We were sitting in the planning and development office inside of the courthouse in Cadensview. The humid, gray day outside seemed to match the mood inside. She went on to say that

> You know realtors will tell you, I know some of them are actually increasing prices right now, because I am in charge of subdivisions and I can tell you they are starting to subdivide

> again [after the recession]. And that's what's so discouraging to me, the speculative development here, but I can't really call it development because no one really puts in sidewalks or streets or anything, they just buy property and divide it into as many pieces as they can according to our ordinances. We don't have zoning so we can't really treat different parts of the county differently. I really worry a lot, we only have, well I mean we lost 200 farms that were 100 acres or more in a seven-year period, they were divided.

I then asked Georgette, who appeared to have extensive knowledge about land use and property values in the county why she thought people were selling their land and how it ended up being subdivided. She sighed deeply and looked pensively out the window for a moment. Her words were always careful and concise, perhaps part of the territory of being in a public office. She said

> I think it's a combination of the things, sometimes farmers will need extra money and land is always their savings, their 401K, their everything, but I think what happens more often is that it happens during a transition, so if the older parents pass away or go to a nursing home, then when it comes to the next generation, they live outside of the county or they have no interest in farming or they can't afford the medical bills of their parents, the only thing they can do with it is to sell it and a lot of times a realtor will get involved and explain that it tends to bring more money if they divide it into pieces. So it actually becomes a downward spiral because residential development does not pay its way in taxes like farm property does, so it actually ends up making taxes more in the long run on

> residential property which makes it harder for people to keep, so it's a cycle unfortunately.

Troy, an elected government official and a business owner shared his experiences in Cadensview with me. We were sitting in his small restaurant and even though it was during off hours between lunch and dinner he got up frequently to answer the phone, scribble down take-out orders and yell them back to the kitchen, and clean off tables. Troy's face was lined with deep creases and his voice was raspy from years of smoking he told me patting the weathered pack of Marlboros in his front pocket. He had the charismatic charm of a politician, like we had always been good friends even though we had only just met at a board of supervisors meeting a few days before the interview. Troy told me that the major changes in the community were "losing three textile plants. At one time we were a large manufacturing area. We even, up until the 1980s, we had a Ben Franklin, which was kind of like the equivalent of Wal-Mart. We had so many more things back there when we had the factories that could support the infrastructure." He had worked in a factory for years before inheriting some property and deciding to go into the food service industry. In addition, he had been an elected public official for nearly four years. He said that Cadensview

> went from the manufacturing area to more of a customer service base. We're basing everything now off of tourism [and] I don't think that's sustainable. I own this store and one a few towns over. Down there is a true tourist town. And it's about seven years ago I think gas spiked at $4.35 a gallon and 20% of the businesses closed within a three month period. You

> know because when you're off the service industry like that...[he trails off and rubs his forehead] – I still think that you need to produce something.

He continued on saying that

> I am a county official so I see the poverty level here. I know the percent eligible of our total population for Medicaid, Medicare and food stamps, but a lot of these people, the old-timers are too proud to apply for them.
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> The whole economy has turned down I'm seeing more of the young people stay and living with their parents. And from a business owner's perspective I see a lot more applications coming through than I ever did before. I get – I had one last week from a girl who's from Cadensview originally, went for school, came back. She's got her Masters degree. And she just wants anything [employment]. Anything! I mean this is really a job for a teenager, something to do after school. I have grown men and women applying, people I went to high school with. They desperately need work and they're willing to work in a kitchen making sandwiches.

In South Central Appalachia, life for most residents has not necessarily changed for the better since the 1970s. Almost 13% of the county residents live below the poverty line. Many residents continue to be very concerned about lack of jobs in the community with almost sixty-percent of the working population commuting outside of the county for work. The availability of relatively cheap land (as perceived by many of the newcomers) is also related to the effects of deindustrialization and the mechanization of agriculture in this region, for example, as old timer landowners' cannot afford to keep their land or their

children have moved away for work and are not interested in farming, demonstrates links to larger economic processes, like globalization, and their impact on local communities such as migration patterns between different socio-economic classes. Theories from environmental sociology, such as treadmill of production and treadmill of accumulation, help highlight the localized repercussions of global structural changes.

A study (2007) done by anthropology and Appalachian studies students at a local college near Cadensview in 2007 studied the in- and out-migration of people in Cadensview.[25] The found that over 41% of migrants left the county for employment, the remaining migrants moved for education, family, or unidentified reasons. Of those who migrated for employment the top occupations were in textile mills, coalmines, the lumber industry, teaching, farming, railroad, and truck driving. The study also found, like other work that has been done on Appalachian migration, that kinship played an important role in migration meaning that people relocated to areas where they knew others (see Obermiller and Maloney 2002).

A demographic study (1997) of Cadensview found that in the early period of migration the 1910s-1940s mostly men migrants left to do farm work in the primarily these states: Illinois, the Dakota Territory, Kansas, Maryland, and coal mining regions to the north and west. A small number of women migrated to work in textile mills, but this trend declined when garment manufacturing came to Cadensview. During this time period most of these migrant workers returned

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[25] This study is also excluded from the bibliography because of the place specific titled.

home in the winters. However, in the mid-twentieth century migrants began to relocate permanently to well defined urban areas within a few hours drive of Cadensview in the same state, to Washington D.C., and to Pennsylvania. This trend continued through the 1980s and remains today. According to this demographic study on Cadensview, since 1970 birth rates in Cadensview have been below national averages and morality rates for the same period also decreased the author consequently determined that "the increasing population [in Cadensview] must, therefore, be the result of in-migration since 1970."[26] These studies demonstrated how Cadensview is linked to economic restructuring, and also, how many of the old-timers still cling to the promise of industry and modernization.

Living the Dream: Newcomers in Cadensview

Cadensview has had two waves of people moving to the community that are relevant to this project. First, the back-to-the-landers of the 1970s and early 1980s came as neo-homesteaders. They rejected mainstream culture and being part of the corporate workforce and instead wanted to farm and "live closer to the land." These newcomers were largely college educated, white, and from middle class backgrounds. During this time, at least eight communes developed in Cadensview where back-to-the-landers shared land and resources. During this time most of the back-to-the-landers were somewhat isolated from old-timer

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[26] This place-specific citation is also excluded from the bibliography.

residents and developed their own very close-knit community and important social networks as artisans and crafters. Because Cadensview lacked jobs, many back-to-the-landers traveled outside of the community to vend their crafts or artwork in craft shows and galleries in metropolitan areas and brought the capital that they generated back to the community. Some of these crafters gained a name for themselves as acclaimed artists and developed a tour where visitors could explore their workshops. Over time, outsiders sought out Cadensview for its artistic community.

Back-to-the-landers also farmed and Cadensview developed regional recognition as a hub for organic produce and meat. Through word of mouth and by advertising in popular counter-culture magazines the back-to-the-land community in Cadensview gained notoriety as a haven for *progressive minded* individuals interested in sustainability and the arts. Above all early newcomers discussed that they made a conscious choice to move to Cadensview because of its pastoral charm and strong sense of community.

Second, an additional group of newcomers began arriving in Cadensview in the 1990s and 2000s. This second group of in-migrants, like the original back-to-the-landers, mostly came from middle-class backgrounds, were white, and college educated. Many were also remote workers, second homeowners, or retirees. These individuals chose Cadensview specifically for its reputation as a progressive place and were drawn to the alternative community that had developed there. This new group of in-migrants did not eschew wealth or income

in the same way that the earlier back-to-the-landers had. Their arrival marked a new development agenda in Cadensview as these individuals began to buy up and revitalize the town center to be more “green” and “sustainable” mimicking cases of environmental gentrification elsewhere, only in a rural area. Their stories tell how place is socially constructed and how the process of uneven development occurs. Places become layered on top of existing communities exacerbating environmental privilege and inequality within the global economic system at the local level. In this case, there are multiple and overlapping interpretations of what type of community Cadensview is and how the different residents perceive what is important to them and who has claim to what rights and development.

The back-to-the-land movement is the name given to the migration of individuals from urban areas to rural areas during the 1960s and 1970s in the United States. Jacob (1997) called the back-to-the-land movement “an integral, though relatively unspectacular, part of the 1960s search for counter-cultural alternatives to the corporatism of mainstream America...the back-to-the-land movement was, in its own quiet way, a broad-based protest against what the spirit of the sixties saw as the irrational materialism of urban life” (p. 3). The self-identified back-to-the-landers that I interviewed shared personal narratives with me during interviews about how they found Cadensview and what drew them to the community. They told me how they gardened passionately, lived in old farmhouses, tents, teepees, built cabins, converted old schools buses into

homes, created a homeschool cooperative, had regular contra-dances, volleyball games and potlucks, and most importantly developed a tight-knit community (Figure 5). Jacob (1997) argued that “the majority [of back-to-the-landers] share a common point of origin: they are returning to their metaphorical, rather than literal roots” (p. 3). The people I interviewed spoke of Cadensview as a “magical” and “authentic” place where they could fulfill their desires of living in a rural place, living sustainably, and being part of a “living, breathing, community where we could live the dream” as one man said. All but one of the back-to-the-landers I interviewed grew up in an urban or suburban area. For example, Rich and his wife Pam moved from a suburban area in the Northeast. They told me that they sold their suburban home and half acre of land and moved to Cadensview where they “bought over 250 acres.” I asked them what living in Cadensview meant to them. Pam replied “we can live away from other people, we can live a lifestyle we’re much more comfortable with, it just suits us more.” Pam and Rich now own and run a successful farm where they raise free-range, organically fed animals for meat. Their ability to purchase 250 acres exemplifies a core tenant of environmental privilege: land ownership.

Karen moved to Cadensview to farm, although she laughed when telling me she had graduated college with an English Literature degree. She was specifically drawn to the alternative back-to-the-land community in Cadensview. Karen had moved from the northeastern city she grew up in because “we had friends down here [in Cadensview] who had moved because

Figure 5

An abandoned home that was made from recycled materials in the 1970s on a commune in Cadensview County

they found an ad about a commune called, Moon Valley. We realized being close to people we knew was important for us." Like Rich and Pam, Karen emphasized that moving to Cadensview was a choice for her and the desire to live a certain kind of lifestyle with people she saw as like-minded.

Theo, a successful artist and business owner, who moved to Cadensview in the mid-1970s had visited South Central Appalachia as a child and remembered the time fondly. Both his parents were university professors and he grew up in a small, New England college town. On moving to Cadensview, Theo recalled

> Back then I was footloose a bit, I had some dear friends from school and one of them had enough money for a down-payment on some land, so I said let's go down to the Blue Ridge Mountains...so we took a cruise. We picked up a hitchhiker and he recommended that we go to Cadensview and said there were some communities there. We came over here [to Cadensview] and poked around and rented a farmhouse and then we ended up staying.
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> My thing was, [and] really since being a late teenager I was already an outsider, I didn't buy into the mainstream model. I didn't want to be a corporate guy. I thought that these were destructive in their effects on the planet and other life-forms and even human beings for that matter and um, I was a back-to-the-lander. I went to the first Earth Day in Connecticut [where I was living at the time] and I thought that this is what my generation will have to confront [he sighs deeply]. It's like my grandparents had World War II, my parents had the Cold War and Civil Rights, and now this is the cause, man! This is

> the struggle! Humans have to find a way of harmoniously living on this little planet. I mean it was that we were starting to do some pretty serious damage and I thought that this is really important to me; I need to be independent of the large industrial scale structures. I was reading things about this and solar and alternative energy and stuff and farming, it was the beginning of a larger movement that I identified with, I felt like I was somehow part of something that was important...

Theo considered himself to be part of the counter-culture movement of the sixties and seventies and felt that his rejection of mainstream culture eventually led him to Cadensview. He felt lucky to have had the resources to invest in property. He explained that he and a group of friends purchased about seventy-five acres in the 1970s and that “we did it as a community effort [but] later we formalized it to be a landowners association. We split off a several little pieces of property around a central corridor so this is owned by everyone and then each smaller plot is deeded out separately.” Theo also said that over the years he and the other land owners realized that sharing property was more difficult than they had envisioned legally and that for practicality “what we found was that collective ownership is not supported by the legal structures of this country, you can’t go to the bank and say well I’m part owner of this property and I want to build a house.” There were several planned communities and communes created during this time. These living arrangements, although communal, were based on land ownership. Some were more cooperative where individuals owned a private parcel of land and shared a larger piece of property that connected the smaller

plots. Others planned communities were more communal. For example, another research participant said of the commune she lived on “it is a land-trust. We’re beneficiaries of the trust and it’s communally owned. We do officially own our own house, the footprint of the house that is...we all came together naively and figured out what we were doing and how deal with the taxes and things like that.” At the heart of the back-to-the-land movement in Cadensview was access to large tracts of land.

Other research participants told similar stories to Theo’s. Carol who moved to Cadensview in the 1970s as a back-to-the-lander said

> Some friends had started a commune here. We bought land here in 1975, and then moved up in 1976. The land was very cheap, it was $300 an acre, we bought twenty [acres] because that’s how much money we had and we paid cash... I’ve been here almost forty years. By the time I had children though I knew I wanted to raise them in the country. I knew I wanted to raise a garden and my own food. That’s always been something that’s been important. And eating good food. So, I just kind of got on the back-to-the-land movement thing. I read *Mother Earth News* and I subscribed to that model, you know...
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> When I first moved here there were not very many transplants, I mean there just weren’t many of us. And there was hardly anyone over the age of forty; we were all very young, very idealistic, and very far apart. I mean there were people on one side of the county and people all the way on the other. And then more and more people have moved in.

For the first several years Carol lived in Cadensview, she and her husband and their children lived in a cabin with no running water or electricity. She believed that over time she and the other back-to-the-landers had really revived Cadensview.

Carol explained to me that when she moved to Cadensview there were few jobs and that she worked at a local restaurant, on farms, and even briefly in a garment factory before it shut down; “I tried the factory thing, but after three days, I said no way.” Then she decided to try the craft fair circuit. She began traveling up and down the east coast on weekends to sell her handmade clothing. She and her husband (who was also an artist) were able to support their family this way for many years. In the early 2000s, Carol and her husband purchased a property in the town center of Cadensview. She now runs a successful business that caters to tourists. By sharing information, expertise, and resources, back-to-the-landers built a successful network of crafters and artisans that over time gained the attention of more and more people interested in visiting or relocating to Cadensview. I found that these social networks were often inclusive and businesses that developed from these early ventures still hired mostly from the newcomer populations.

Early back-to-the-landers, including Theo and Carol, became involved in the arts and crafts scene to earn a living. Theo’s recollection touches on many common experiences

> [W]hen I moved there was no local economy I could tap into, I did farm work, I helped build stuff, field work, orchard work,

> apple tree pruning, rough construction, basically I was an odd job guy, then I started talking to a neighbor of ours who had also moved here and he was doing arts and crafts shows and going to Pittsburg and Richmond and Atlanta and Ohio and Maryland and the Carolinas and doing twenty to twenty-five shows per year and producing his own work and selling directly to customers. You could live anywhere, you could go to where the money was…We did well for a couple of old dirt hippies, we did really well, bought this house, bought a building for our business, and we still have our cabin and land.

Carl, who also moved Cadensview in the early 1970s, told me he pieced together all types of work including planting trees, which took him out of the county for weeks at a time. Carl told me that he "had grown up real wealthy, but that lifestyle was total chaos, total bullshit." During college he and some friends, including his girlfriend at the time, decided they wanted to start a commune, living together communally like pioneers making everything from scratch, getting their hands dirty. His mom had the money for him to buy land. He described his move as

> [W]ell, it was fate. I found it [an advertisement for land in Cadensview] in a newsstand on a Sunday. We were looking for land. We were really into earth changes and living a new way, we had to move. [Land] it's a good investment, that's what my dad always said, because it was true and it is true. People like us [back-to-the-landers] just kind of were trickling in from the start. It was mostly word of mouth, but some people advertised in *Mother Earth News*, I know several people who found there way here because they read about it.

Other respondents also tended to use words like *fate* to describe their arrival to Cadensview. The back-to-the-landers I interviewed were very passionate about environmental issues and creating a more sustainable existence. They also admitted to initially being overly idealistic when they moved to Cadensview.

Some back-to-the-landers like Carl still seemed to care deeply about their individual impact on the land. Carl's house was a tiny one-room cabin built from recycled materials. He had very few possessions, no running water, an outhouse, and portable solar charger for his laptop and a lamp. He said he like to stay connected to folks through the internet and that he had built up quite a following of individuals interested in his blog on grass roots social change and the ecological challenges humans face. Because the weather was nice, during the interview we sat outside at a sagging picnic table covered in lichen next to the huge community garden that Carl shared with his neighbors. When I arrived Carl was just getting things ready to can green beans. He had a small Coleman stove set up on the picnic table to boil water and glass jars lining one of the benches. Others, like Carol and Theo, owned multiple properties and their homes were moderate, but upscale with new appliances, upmarket counter tops, and high-end furniture and artwork.

Some of the back-to-the-landers who moved in to Cadensview wanted to expand the alternative community. There were advertisements placed in a few

well-known counter-culture magazines like *Mother Earth News* and the *Whole Earth Catalog* that may have brought people to the area. For others, it was simply by word of mouth that they heard about Cadensview.

Joseph and Glenda moved to Cadensview in the early 1980s and talked back and forth during our interview to describe their arrival to Cadensview

> Living in a city in the 1960s and seventies showed me that I wanted to live a much more rurally. I met Glenda in college and we both had a similar path in mind. We both wanted to live a simpler rural lifestyle and have lower impact. [Joseph]
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> We had a little nest egg of money and my recollection of the conversation was well you know we better take this summer off. Don't start a garden! We'd been traveling...so we were just making our way up through the trees, through the mountains we were looking around and we would go into a town and we would we head to the Chamber of Commerce and try to get an idea of what the tax structure was like and then we go to see real estate agents and we would talk to them and then they would show us places. [Glenda]
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> The further north we went, you know, people from D.C. and the other metropolitan areas had bought second homes and really ruined the scene so we realized that we needed to come back to the southern mountains...
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> We were in a store talking with someone about buying land and this guy who was one of the part-owners of an intentional community here [in Cadensview] came in to buy some vitamins. He overheard the conversation [and] said if you want community, Cadensview is the place, man. He invited us out to a potluck and to play volleyball... [Joseph]

> Well that next Sunday there we were. We pulled into this field and walked down. We looked around and we said this is where we belong, I mean when we walked up that day and the river was flowing and we saw a lot of brothers and sisters. I don't know if you can relate to that, but when we saw these people we knew immediately...I mean it really looked like our dream of where we wanted to be. So it was very easy to say okay we found our home now. We just need to find a house to live in. [Glenda]

Joseph and Glenda's story highlights common themes of a desire to live in a community with like-minded individuals. They also found that land was cheaper in the Blue Ridge Mountains than other places, especially the northeast where they were from. This affordability allowed them to run a small farm that made little, if any, profit and to live comfortably off their inheritance.

Mauve reminisced on what drew her to Cadensview in the early 1980s. She and her husband at the time were living in New England. After the birth of their first child, they wanted a change of pace. A friend recommended the Appalachian Mountains and they came to visit. We initially met at a film showcase in Cadensview critiquing the meat industry and industrial agriculture that had a panel discussion with local organic farmers afterwards. She raised several astute points during the panel discussion and seemed like an interesting person to talk to. We met for the interview at her home, an old-farmhouse that she had fixed up and painted in quirky colors. Driving down the tree lined gravel path to her home was like uncovering a hobbit's home in Middle Earth from *Lord of the Rings*. Her house was set against a perfectly round hill with a small pond.

When I arrived a heavy mist was rising from the water, evaporating in the morning sun. On that particular spring day, the dewy grass was like little shards of emeralds and the white daffodils contrasted with the pinks, blues, and yellows of her home giving it a very cheerful energy. She spoke of what it meant to her to live in Cadensview

> When I first moved here it was pretty amazing because we would have these gatherings and all these people we'd never met before would show up and it was like we knew them. We all had in common the desire to get away from, what I call, "Dick, Jane, and Sally World," of the post World War Depression where everything's got to be the perfect white house. Everybody's got to have the little white fence around it and all that stuff we grew up with. We were looking for an alternative way to live because that typical kind of upward mobile middle-class wasn't attracting us...we were all getting that our disconnect from the earth was really affecting us.
>
> I chose to live this independent, do-it-yourself life-style. It is low-income so I don't get to retire. It is very much like the small farmer in that way. I chose to work with my hands rather than the more academic or salaried work that I obtained my degrees in [she attended a very prestigious school in the North and has both bachelor's and master's degrees]. I think there's something about recognizing...what it means to live close to the land. To choose to do it, not as an aboriginal or a Native person to the land—maintaining an old culture—but to come from the newer culture and go back to it, is a different kind of choice...it is very much tied in to how to live as harmlessly as possible as a human being on this land.

The back-to-the-landers I interviewed for this study that migrated to Cadensview in the 1970s and early 1980s prided themselves on their rejection of mainstream norms and their embracement of poverty and more ecologically sustainable lifestyles. Respondents often remarked on quality of life rather than abundance of material goods. The majority of these early back-to-the-landers were college educated and came from upper middle-class backgrounds. Many of them were also part of the 1960s counter-culture movement. Glenda said, “I didn’t want to raise my kids in a culture based on money. I wanted them to know the land, to live off the land, to not be a slave to the rat race.” Another back-to-the-lander and self-employed crafter, Earl, expressed puzzlement that long-term residents – many of whom were his age –had moved away for work although “they had paradise here in these mountains.” Understanding the history of back-to-the-landers in Cadensview is important because this group of newcomers paved the way for the gentrifiers who migrated to Cadensview in the 1990s and 2000s. It also highlights that even though these individuals rejected many mainstream norms, property ownership was still a key feature of this movement. Many of the back-to-the-landers I interviewed also participated in community development projects.

Rural Rebound

By the 1990s and 2000s, another wave of people moved to Cadensview. Like their predecessors many of these folks spoke of the land, dreams of living sustainably, and a strong sense of community as things that drew them to the

area. These individuals migrated to Cadensview having heard of it because of connections they had to back-to-the-landers, the art/craft scene, or to the emerging organic farming trend. One man, sixty-three year old Allen, a self-identified entrepreneur, business and property owner, noted that in the mountains “it is live and let live” and that the “spirit of the people and the land” is really what attracted him and his wife to the area, “not to mention the mountains, they’re just magnificent.” Others had similar perceptions about the land, people, and community.

Rhonda, a forty-seven year old who owns her own business as a life coach and who relocated to Cadensview in the 1990s said

> I came up here a couple of times and there was a health food store and that was really important to me. I didn’t really know anybody, but I wanted to be part of a community. I wanted to be from a town where people knew each other and care about each other and it wasn’t so impersonal. I grew up in rural area that’s now a suburb, so I’m one of those people that I lost my roots, I couldn’t live the lifestyle I grew up with because it’s just not there anymore.

Rhonda discussed in depth how she had grown up in a rural community, but that it had been destroyed by suburban sprawl. She said that she wanted to raise her kids somewhere “real.”

Like Rhonda, Deborah moved to the Cadensview in the early 1990s. She shared her story of finding Cadensview with me

> What drew me to Cadensview? I was definitely at a point that I wanted to change my lifestyle. I was willing to not drive my life on a profession as much as the kind of life that I wanted to live. I wanted to live in a rural area and closer to the land—probably like the back-to-the-landers. After college I was really interested in getting involved in culture that involved like Native Americans and the indigenous people because...I really was changing direction...instead of going to law school I wanted to explore. I really wanted a lifestyle that was more earth-based and involved non-humans in my life because I felt like that was a value-system that our culture really lacked...
>
> So, it's lifestyle choice initially brought me to Cadensview...there's something magical or special about it, because I had traveled all over the world and I felt at home here. I felt I was supposed to be here. It wasn't just people. It was land related. It was so tangible, just the southern mountains. It was something that was obvious to me. I didn't have to ponder it.

Deborah echoed many of the same sentiments as the back-to-the-landers. She came to Cadensview wanting to escape a more traditional lifestyle. She rejected the idea of going to law school, as her parents believed she would. She had also traveled extensively domestically and abroad. In Cadensview she worked as an artist and as a community organizer and planner.

Many of the newcomers to Cadensview in the 1990s and 2000s had similar ideas to the back-to-the-landers, although I found that they did not adhere to the same principles of rejecting wealth or mainstream society. For instance,

Taylor, a thirty-five year remote worker whose job and six-figure salary allowed her to live “in a cabin in the woods and fly to Manhattan twice a month” said that “I’ve always been torn between the latest tech stuff and I’ve always liked nature a lot, I was in the girl scouts and stuff, so yeah [I moved here] just for nature and being in the country. I grew up in suburbia, so it’s nice to be in the country. I had gardens before, but this is really working the land” she said nodding to her picturesque garden in the field next to her cabin, which boasted a scenic vista of the mountains amid her thirty-eight acre property. Taylor purchased the land from a well-know television actor who purchased a vacation home in Cadensview in the 1990s at the height of her fame, but later had to sell.

Allen who fell in love with Cadensview after visiting in the early 1990s relocated his entire business to the county. He said “It feels like home. It's probably the first place I've lived that does feel like home. I wasn't really anchored in one place for a long time. It feels like home in relation to my relationship to nature, and to topography, and to small town living.” He said that alternative community and scenery attracted him and his wife to the area.

The desire by these individuals to live in a rural place and live close to the land is related to consumer-based explanations of gentrification. Gentrifiers often seek an “authentic” or “real” experience and, as these narratives demonstrates, seek to find it in this rural mountain community. Yet these consumption explanations are still clearly linked to global economic processes, such as the restructuring of capitalism and uneven development, which allows some people

more economic freedom and the ability to choose where to live, while others are increasingly bound to the whims of low-level jobs in the service economy. In this case, through property ownership, rural rebounders and their predecessors experience environmental privilege. They have also not been impacted in the same ways by local deindustrialization and, in fact, benefited from this process because of cheap land and abandoned sites in which to invest. Furthermore, using the lens of environmental and rural gentrification to look at social change in contemporary Appalachia illustrates the ways in which this local, and often misperceived as isolated, region is connected to the global economy. Newcomers with the means to relocate rejected their suburban or urban lifestyles and moved to Cadensview during the back-to-the-land movement and later during the 1990s and 2000s. For many long-term residents in the area, times were very different.

Property Value, Rent, and Interpretations of Socio-Economic Class

Based on interviews, research participants said a major effect of newcomers moving in is that places to rent have become increasingly more difficult to find as more and more property owners take advantage of marketing properties to people relocating to the area or tourists through Airbnb or by operating as a private lodging business.[27] One man, thirty-five year old Paul, said

[27] Airbnb is a business that helps individuals rent their properties for short term period using a website that facilitates travel times and other logistics.

that he shared a one bathroom home with three other adults (two-couples) and three children because “they couldn’t find a cheap place on their own.” Another community member said during a board of supervisors meetings that “houses and even trailers that you could rent ten years ago for $350-$400 are now $800-$1000. That’s just ten years and I’ll tell you what, wages haven’t gone up, in fact I work less now because they cut my hours,” she said. More and more rental properties are becoming vacation rentals and the new apartments that have been built are luxury apartments that rent for “$1100 per month” according to the apartment manager and accountant (Figure 6). Like other gentrified communities, increased rent is a major concern for residents.

Travis grew up in the community and works in the construction business. Having rented a living space for a number of years and being friends with many other local individuals in the same situation, he said

> There are not enough rentals for local people, especially for people who can’t afford housing. It’s a lot of people. For example a guy I know now, he just needs a one-year stay can’t find anywhere, and another friend of mine, her situation changed, she needed a place to rent, there just aren’t enough in Cadensview at all.
> *Why?* [Interviewer]

Figure 6

One of the new luxury apartment buildings in the town center

> Well, it's too expensive, so many people wanting to rent, they're raising the rent and the rent here is getting to be about $800 for a decent place, no one can afford that, so then you move out to the county and you live in a small trailer for $400 or $500, unless you can find someone you know. So people are trying to rent, but they can't afford nothing and honestly if their credit was good they could buy cheaper than they could rent. And gas, how do you pay for that anyway? I mean I lean on anyone who can help and just get people, family, someone with money to back me, that's huge. If you don't got that, what do you do?

Travis' questions were rhetorical. We were eating lunch during his break from one of his three jobs. Travis recently received his real-estate license in addition to opening a small recreational tourist company (with the help of his family and community grant). He believed that "Cadensview is changing fast" and he "wanted to take advantage of it like all the newcomers are doing." He qualified his statement by saying "I'm not saying that we're [the old-timers/locals in Cadensview] on the poverty level you know, but we're still not up to that level where we can afford to go out on the weekends or travel, for the most part most people here are used to making smaller money, unless you're one of these business owners who has the opportunity to make money, I haven't made money yet, but I hope to if my business takes off." Travis was not critical of newcomers, rather he saw them helping Cadensview. He wanted to model his business ideas off some of the people he had met who opened successful businesses geared at tourists in Cadensview.

When I asked Troy, local business owner and government official, about property value and land use in Cadensview he said

> All we have anymore here is real estate. You get the newer ones that have moved here, you know [they say] raise taxes, it's a good thing. We don't mind paying more. But then you have the old-timers, I know ones that, like this year we've got nine properties come up for sale at auction in front of the courthouse steps that people couldn't pay their taxes on for three years. We had like over 300 people behind on their property taxes. I mean you take my mother-in-law whose living here in the county. Her social security check is $800 a month. She's got 40 acres and an old farmhouse. The tax bill was almost $1600, so two months' worth of her pay has to go just for her taxes.
>
> I look at the building permits going in every month. And we're getting more million dollar homes being built in Cadensview...And we're kind of riding the back part of the wave [of the economic recession]. Our properties have stayed high where most everybody else's have gone down. Our per capita income has gone way down, but the property values have stayed high because we do have retirees, these new people.

Troy told me that he owned some mobile homes outside of the town center that he rented to folks and that he tried to keep the rent low so that people could afford to live there. He lowered his voice and put both firsts on the table and told me that another man in the county, who was a newcomer and owned several high-end rental properties, had accused him of being a "slum-lord." He said that

this made him angry because he "would live in any one of trailers and I keep 'em real maintained. I mean my daughter live in one for God's sake."[28] Juxtaposing property owners' (particularly newcomers') understandings of the price of living spaces with renters, as well as their thoughts on social class and poverty in Cadensview, illuminated some of the differences in understanding and interpretation between newcomers and old-timers.

I asked the owner of a vacation rental property (in addition to being owner of two homes and a business) who had moved to the area as part of the back-to-the-land movement in the 1970s if housing was hard to find in the community? She replied, "Absolutely not. I made several thousand dollars last year just renting the vacation property on the weekends and that pays the mortgage on the building. I know people can find housing if they're willing to work to find a cheap place." Her belief in meritocracy, even in regard to housing, was a common theme in interviews. This highlights a key feature of the logic of capital that somehow the privileged deserve what they have because they are perceived to work harder. This idea of meritocracy was internalized by almost all research participants, old-timers/locals and newcomers alike.

Ben, a remote worker who moved to the area after owning a vacation

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[28] As a politician Troy was disliked by many members of the alternative newcomer population because of his conservative political views, still he won the election by over 56% of the votes (running against a newcomer). All the other districts in the county except also had conservative Republicans in office; only one district even had a contester in the last election.

home in Cadensview for over a decade said

> I think the phenomenon of farmers being driven off their farms is a generational transition point and a result of small farmers' problems all over the country. It's not a situation where there are developers gobbling up the land at this point and the price of housing too high to move into. I suspect that prices of housing in Cadensview are still very modest relative to other places.

Both Ben and the owner of the vacation rental displayed a common attitude that I found in Cadensview. Many affluent newcomers and even the back-to-the-landers seemed disconnected from old-timers in regard to their perceptions about wealth, income, and property values. Furthermore, they seemed unaware of housing issues or their own privilege as property owners. When pressed, they saw themselves as bringing vital resources and expertise to Cadensview.

In comparison to other counties nearby, I found that land in Cadensview was more expensive (save for the county with the state university) by about $1500 to $3000 per acre. Vanna, a local realtor said to me that "you know a lot of people are interested in moving to Cadensview. We, for a lack of a better term, have a good reputation out there a fun place to be, a good solid community, and a very accepting place that doesn't mind outsiders." She went on to say "Cadensview has seen some outlandish sky high prices for land, for the most part though land is going anywhere from seven to ten thousand an acre. Some properties are priced at fifteen to twenty thousand...so you know there's a there's a wide range I mean there are some mountainsides and then there are some

beautiful farm fields." To people moving in from places where the median income is higher and land sells for five or six times higher than in Cadensview, these land prices seem very cheap.

Another common refrain I found was the tendency to blame poverty in Cadensview on poor lifestyle choices rather than also looking at social structure. In this way they often portrayed paternalistic attitudes toward other community members. Newcomers also tended to conflate ideas about poverty with ideas about land stewardship. Luke, a business owner and back-to-the-lander who arrived in Cadensview in the early 1980s said

> We have all this destruction and people losing their homes and everything because most of the problem country is the fact that people want more than they need. And if you think things make you happy it doesn't necessarily mean it's a good thing, if you want something just for ownership or possession. When I was growing up it used to be called "Keeping Up with the Joneses." If you have to have things for that reason then you're always going to be in economic trouble. But if your happiness is geared not so much toward what you have but toward a good education and the arts in reading and music and the things to feed your mind and your inner being and your fun side rather then your business then to me that's what we ought to be looking at...I mean people spend their money on cigarettes or a cellphone or entertainment, who have cable or satellite TV and then complain they're unhappy because they don't have enough money. They choose that. They choose that reality.

Luke's viewpoint made sense and yet he used it to defend his belief that he and other newcomers like him were better qualified to take care of the land and ecosystems in Cadensview. Luke's livelihood also depended on selling hand-made and high-end mantle-pieces to boutique hotels.

Patrick, who moved to Cadensview to start an organic farm in the mid 2000s, contemplated his thoughts on poverty in the county. He moved from a wealthy suburb further south and worked hard to keep his farm going. He and his wife invested their savings into buying the land and prided themselves on their quality of life and feeling "alive." He said "Does poverty exist here? Probably, I guess Cadensview has a 1% but the 1% in Cadensview is still way middle class compared to the rest of the world." Compared to where he had moved from in Cadensview "land was a steal." In Cadensview, wealthy newcomers could flex their power through wealth and status by essentially being big fish in a small pond.

Josiah was born in the county to back-to-the-lander parents, but moved away for college and graduate school. He recently moved home and opened a business producing and selling sauerkraut and pickles. He said Cadensview today was what he dreamed it would be as a teenager and remembered that back then there was nothing to do, but that he was lucky to have parents who still provided him with cultural opportunities.

> *Do you see a lot of poverty here?* [Interviewer]
> It's obviously harder to see poverty in a rural area than other places. Some people do bring up land prices a lot, I mean

certainly small farmers are stymied by not being able to buy twenty acres of land, especially when people are moving in from Greensboro and Chapel Hill who want vacation homes here and everyone sees that there is the possibility that they could sell their land for x amount, but the barriers of growth for my business is access to markets, it's a distribution to markets, we just don't have access to population to be able to sell our wares

The question for me as a business owner and for others opening businesses here is how to get it to market. I think the economic state of the people who live here is a barrier, you want to have a business like mine where you get off the ground and your first success is selling to your neighbors, but they have to be able to afford it or you have to convince them it's worth it.

If I weren't from here and didn't have my parents support and the ability to use them it would be really hard to afford a piece of land or the piece I could afford would be much smaller. So I think we have to ride the ebb and flow, more people with money moving here means that more people can sell their wares and afford more things, so there just needs to be a constant balance, we're not going to chase people out, we're not going to say you're not from here, you can't buy land, but we can help facilitate responsible land use. It's hard though because people [old-timers] here have a mental block, a cultural mental block and it's a [he hesitates], I don't know it's like this secessionist independence almost...

Josiah, like Luke, thought of himself and others like him in the back-to-the-lander community as better stewards of the land than old-timers. This exemplified a privileged attitude common among interviewees.

Tony, an affluent newcomer and former owner and chief executive officer (CEO) of a small company and member a local non-profit community-building organization which he founded shared his thoughts on poverty in Cadensview and the economic system more generally with me

> Particularly Appalachian communities in the Blue Ridge, but also in the Alleghenies, and the coalfields, and so forth, have had so much depression through natural resource extraction. Coal mines. Timbering. Communities have lost their whole sense of identity, who they are. Here, as a developer, I felt that through music, and crafts, the arts, agri-tourism, downtown revitalization that we could help communities regain their sense of place, and a sense of who they are. So that's the big concept. I want to save the ingenuity and entrepreneurial spirit of a community.
>
> And to answer your question, do I see poverty here, I don't. I don't see it. I see a lot of people, they come into the Ice Cream Parlor and plunk down their $3 or their $5, and you know it really means something to them, to do that. They don't have a lot, but I don't see the kind of crushing poverty that you see in other places.

Tony's comments were typical of the responses I received about poverty in Cadensview. As a newcomer to Cadensview he was attracted by the alternative community and believed that he was well positioned to save the

community and local eco-systems. He told me about building his business from the ground up and the trials and triumphs of relocating to Cadensview and then his desire to revitalize the town and county through sustainable development projects. Tony said he was well off in comparison to others in the community, but that he did not like to think of wealth in that way. Above all Tony said that he did not see poverty in Cadensview. This was a common answer when I asked newcomers to Cadensview about poverty.

Calling it Gentrification

Research participants volunteered their opinions about community change in Cadensview and often called it gentrification with no prompting from me during interviews. Kimberley, for example, said

> people have this idea... I think that this is one of those difficulties with having the gentrified downtown. I know it's not as gentrified in some places, but people have this impression that Cadensview has more than it actually does. In some ways I think a lot of the artists and people who are here moving here or have moved here create that space, that image...

Relatedly, Lorraine, an old-timer told me “The town has two faces now, the gentrified side over on Main Street that the tourists see and then the real place between the Shell Station and the Save-X [a local gas station/convenience store].” The word gentrification kept coming up in my interviews, even though I was not expecting it to. Even more, almost everyone attributed these changes to

affluent newcomers and said that it had all happened quickly, in a ten-year period or so. Mauve told me that “The town is kind of caught in the middle between needing to do more but not wanting to raise taxes or push people – I mean I guess almost see it as a straight case of gentrification. It’s like you have a population and then new people coming in who are raising the taxes.”

In Cadensview, community change is linked to globalization and economic restructuring and also to the in-migration of newcomers who bring development agendas with them and the capital to fund their projects. Karen captures the sentiment that many of my research participants echoed about community change in Cadensview

> Well, Cadensview, let’s see how should I say this, is in great danger of floundering in its own popularity, it has quite become the hip and cool place to be and conversely for the same reason that I love being here or my daughter wants to move back here, there are a lot of cool things going on and a lot of cool people, but cool people still eat and they poop and by that bringing it right down to the graphic they’re going to consume food they need housing, residential development, they need sewage systems, they need water, and many of these people are coming to this area with a very different idea than the natives have or that I even had [as a back-to-the lander] or that the old hippies had when they moved here which was let’s work with the land, let’s not make a big footprint, and I think that a lot of the retirees and even some of the alternative minded community are moving here with a much higher scale of living in mind and are already putting a

> burden on our county government, our road systems, the septic systems, the ability of this area to provide both clean water and septic drainage, I mean all these issues...and what happens to people, the natives here, when they can't make their fields and forests productive enough to do whatever they think they need to do and this might be sending their kids to college...what an outrageous expense that is...it might be providing for their elderly care, how can you fault a farmer for selling the farm off in little chunks when they need to pay for elder care for themselves...

Karen discusses many of the classic and well-established outcomes of rural and environmental gentrification, and in this way, Cadensview is generalizable. In rural Appalachia, though, gentrification is just beginning and has received minimal scholarly attention. The majority of changes in Cadensview, for example, have happened quickly–over about a ten-year period–and other communities that look to Cadensview as a model of development should take note of this process and environmental privilege and the displacement of lower income residents as an effect.

A Note on Race and Ethnicity

Gentrification often implies the displacement of minority communities, especially in urban areas. In Cadensview, I found that stratification was largely based on class, but that racism was also prevalent. Almost all the white participants in this study tended to downplay or ignore race and ethnicity altogether. Issues of racism or discrimination were never mentioned during

interviews unless I brought them up. The majority of white participants said that there was no racism in Cadensview or, if there was, they did not see it.

White old-timers like Bethany told me “racism has never really been an issue here.” Many of the old-timers focused on school and factory integration as their reference point for discussing race. Kenneth said “you know when they integrated the schools and all them news outlets acted like it would be a big deal, I remember them even bringing cameras up here outside of school, but no one here cared. I mean the n******s came to school and we didn’t pick on them and stuff.” Agnes remembered when “the coloreds first were able to work in the factory we didn’t give ‘em no trouble, we just acted like they was one of us. I mean maybe a few people wouldn’t talk to them none, but I did. I never had a problem with them.” Or Joan, who grew up the daughter of a prosperous storeowner, remembered having a series of African-American housekeepers that her father liked to hire. She told me that he only hired

> the high-yellows [a derogatory term for light skinned African-Americans] and I played with their children just like they were like me. I do remember them having to go to a different school and Joanna, that was our colored maid, she’d have to get up real early to walk them there until they were old enough to walk themselves. I got to ride the school bus, I remember that.

Troy, a government official, told me that he did not think racism still existed in Cadensview because “[w]e’ve got a black guy on the town council.” He went on to say that he did occasionally get complaints from constituents about racism, but that

> Usually after investigating it's not really racist, it's more you know just I mean it could be, well, you know a lot of racism is a perception thing. And when you come in from an outside standpoint because I've had questions about students in school asking me to get involved with it and even though it's not my realm I'll still investigate and usually it's not. It's just perceived that way. You know in reality, everybody has been treated like that or discriminated the same way in some situation.

These quotes from local white residents, contrary to their stated assertions, suggest that racism is still prevalent in Cadensview.

The old-timer African-Americans in Cadensview who I interviewed had very different memories of racism in Cadensview. When I attended a high-school reunion for an all-black school in Cadensview that had shut down soon after schools were integrated, many individuals shared their stories with me. Barbara said that she remembered that first day of school like it was yesterday, she was the first of one of three black students to attend one of the smaller high schools in Cadensview County that has since been closed due to consolidation. She said that after Cadensview was forced to integrate, school buses remained off limits to blacks. She said that her uncle had driven her and her brother to school that day and that no one talked to her. She said "they threw pennies at me in the hallway and called me the n-word. I don't think I stopped shaking for at least a few weeks." Others had similar memories of integration in Cadensview. Martha remembered working in a sewing factory and how, on the day that she and a few other black women started work, some of the white women staged a walkout and

quit on the spot. She also said that managers often treated black workers as more disposable, especially when the lay-offs happened. Michaela, who currently has a teenage daughter, told me that she had gone to the school board after her daughter was threatened and called the n-word on the school bus; she said nothing came of it and that she had actually overheard one of the members say that she "needed to stop playing the race card." When I asked Michaela about her thoughts on the newcomers to Cadensview, she replied "I think the hippies bring a different set of values here, I mean a lot of them don't even seem to have to work." She told me she did not have many feelings about the development in the town-center because it was not somewhere she visited frequently.

White newcomers had interesting perceptions on race in Cadensview and their role. The majority of these individuals divulged to me that they had not given much thought to racism in the county. Mauve, one of the few newcomers I talked to who said she had thoughts on racism said

> I met one of the old time blacks of Cadensview, I think she's retired. I was doing an art project for all the clients for a couple of years at what is now the Adult Ed Center. I was talking to her and boy she had a story, and again, I would have loved to have more stories about the black-white relationships in Cadensview, but she didn't want to talk about that. She didn't want that attention. That's another thing I learned about the psychology of being black in Cadensview, is you stay invisible. What we learned coming from the North where a lot of things were more liberalized, to come down here, was that the African-Americans in this county, were almost all

> descendants of the original slaves. Very few, until very recently. They were previously all descendants and they knew their place.

Mauve went on to tell me that she had a friend who was an old-timer who she had met when she was tutoring adult literacy classes; she said he was a "black man and he and I used to just shoot the shit when we saw each other. One day he told me, 'Boy it was really good when you hippies moved into Cadensview because it took the attention away from us." She told me that this man's wife was from Bermuda and that when she had met her, they started talking about cooking and "I told her you could get ginger at the health food store," but the woman replied that her husband told her never to go in there. Mauve said she was shocked and said to the woman

> 'Wait a minute. You've got to go there, they've got fresh ginger' and she freaked out when she heard that. She said, 'Oh my God, I've been looking for that all over the place.' I asked her why she couldn't go to the health food store and she said it was 'one of those class things.' You see the attitude of her husband was that the health food store was one of those 'upper things' where only people with money go to. It blew me away. Here I am, a Yankee, coming down here and I'm feeling very much at home. Even though that alternative community was sort of our big family here, and people living here don't feel at home.

To Mauve, newcomers like her were more open-minded and yet still were ignorant of race relations in Cadensview. Furthermore, she expressed that the alternative newcomers had somehow decreased racism by re-focusing prejudice

onto themselves. I did not find this to be the case when I interviewed African-Americans in Cadensview.

Other groups in Cadensview experience prejudice and discrimination as well. I learned that a house in the center of town that is the rental property of a wealthy newcomer (who told me the story) had been the scene of a very sad situation. Two Latino immigrant families had been living in the home during the winter and the electricity and water were cut off, they lived there for several months with an infant, buying water, and using kerosene heaters because they were afraid to approach the owner. Many Latino/a migrant workers come to Cadensview to work on the Christmas tree farms. Unfortunately for this project I did not much access to this community. I did speak with Nathan, who as a farm manager, told me

> We have some Mexican folks who work here, young guys, who speak English well, they've lived here for awhile, maybe two years, they're folks that my boss found by asking around and they both live in houses that he rents to them...
> I would say, I mean with those guys out on the farm, I do treat them differently, I recognize that, communication is different. I mean it is Hispanics versus a bunch of white girls [he is referring to workers who find this farm through the WWOOF Program, an organization that places volunteers on organic farms around the world].
> *Can you elaborate? [Interviewer]*
> I mean, it's the way I talk to him or his wife, I mean it might come across as speaking down to them and I guess the things that I have them do, I mean Pelé is a great worker, he's

> smart, and there are things that I can explain to him and things I can't, but there are things I ask him to do that I just don't ask the whites.

Overall I found that racism is prevalent in Cadensview in many traditional, colorblind, and overt ways. Racism also existed in the ways that many newcomers denied that racism exist or believe that their arrival had somehow deflected racism away from minority groups.

Prelude To Development

The early back-to-the-landers that migrated to Cadensview in the 1970s and 1980s are important in two ways to the establishment of development projects in the 1990s and 2000s. First, in the early 1980s a group of newcomers created the community building organization Alliance for Community Action (ACA). This group said that it "spontaneously emerged from many excited gatherings of folks new and old to Cadensview, all seeking to establish a nurturing community for themselves and their children. The ACA's purpose has been to network our human resources as a basis of education and community building." ACA was the model for non-profit groups that emerged later on. ACA worked as an organization that distributed funds to causes such as scholarships for students to attend the local private school (created and led primarily by alternative newcomers to the community in the 1970s and 1980s), start-up grants for cultural projects and businesses including one of the well known music festivals, and a community newsletter that is still in existence, though now in

digital form, and distributed primarily among members of the alternative newcomer community.

Second, a group of well-known artists who moved to the community developed the Cadensview Falling Leaf Tour (CFLT) a driving tour where visitors follow signs and a map that takes them to various workshops around the county that gained regional recognition as a model of businesses working together to attract tourists and connect to outside markets. Both ACA and CFLT were models for the non-profit community building organizations that emerged in the 1990s and 2000s in Cadensview and the region. A Cadensview community member who was on a regional planning commission to create a music heritage driving trail in the Blue Ridge Mountains (of which Cadensview became a part of) said that "we were looking around at models and if you're familiar with CFLT of Cadensview, they've been doing that for 25 or 30 years and that got attention at the state level and in community development." Early back-to-the-landers also serve on the boards of some of the newer CBOs in addition to working as investors.

On my last visit to Cadensview I noticed a new wall (Figure 7) that I had not seen before near a parking lot between the new up-scale, *green* hotel and a popular bar and fine dining restaurant nearby. The parking lot had been there

Figure 7

The new fence in Cadensview

since they tore down a small building that was there in the 1990s. The parking lot used to be gravel, but is now paved with a stone sidewalk running on one side with nice, new wooden benches and streetlight. The wall separated the parking lot from a small mobile home park and it seemed obvious that the wall was intended to hide the trailers. When I inquired about this new wall I got a variety of answers. First, I asked Carol about it and she responded, “What wall? Oh, you mean the new fence. That’s for the privacy of the people in the trailers.” When I mentioned that the trailers had been there since at least the 1960s and no one had thought to put a “fence” there before she laughed and said she saw my point. Later, during interviews with both Allen and Henry, leaders of development in Cadensview, they both expressed strong feelings about the trailers. Allen told me “I have offered them five times what those lots are worth and they won’t sell.” Henry, who had led the fence-building project, said “those trailers are a real eyesore.” The wall in Cadensview symbolizes many themes from this chapter, including the exacerbation of environmental privilege as an outcome of uneven development in Cadensview, because of the arrival of affluent newcomers interested in development projects.

In this chapter, I examined the narratives of place and spatial inequality. Gentrifiers moved to the area to “escape” feelings of alienation in an urban or suburban space only to become Puritanical in his/her sense of place under the auspice of progressivism, and thus created new modes of alienation for old-timers by re-organizing community structures. Locals/old-timers may resent the

cultural capital that newcomers bring and see them as elitist while still believing whole-heartedly in the United States as a functioning meritocracy.

CHAPTER V

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT: AGENDAS AND PROJECTS

In Cadensview, newcomers have led many of the development projects in the town center and county in the past two decades by forming investment partnerships and working together on revitalization projects. These investment groups, who labeled themselves as “forward thinking,” also established a series of non-profit community-building organizations (CBOs) that help facilitate projects and generate ideas and are largely funded through donations and also compete for state and federal grant money. In addition, both a tourism board and a new economic development task force were created in 2011. Recent work in tourism studies attributes successful tourism development to community demographics, citing higher levels of education, self-employment, and wealth among local citizens as reasons why tourism does better in some communities than others (Goetz and Swaminathan 2006; Kline, Hao, Alderman, Kleckley, and Gray 2014). These studies also noted a possible relationship between bohemian culture or creative class in an area and thriving tourism (Kline et al., 2014). In the 2000s Cadensview was recognized by state and regional agencies, the state governor, and by other communities as a model of what successful development should look like in the region.

Newcomers have also disproportionately established new businesses in the town center (primarily in the service industry like shops, galleries, lodging facilities, and restaurants) and in the county (primarily organic farms and

music/festival venues some of which have non-profit status). The primary focuses of development have been on promoting tourism and revitalizing the buildings and landscape in the town center and to a lesser degree trying to localize the economy, all under the larger umbrella theme of *sustainable development*.

CBO and Investment Leaders Describe Their Sustainability Goals

At the heart of the private and community-building organizations' development work in Cadensview were interpretations over how best to create projects that would be ecologically friendly and move toward a localized economy. CBO members and organizers were mainly newcomers who were drawn to Cadensview because of its reputation for having a progressive alternative community.

Patrick, a real estate agent, landowner, and self-described newcomer had a thick Philadelphia accent and declared proudly that he had left the city years ago to move to the southern mountains. He was sitting behind a large and very cluttered desk when I met him in his office. The realty firm was located on Main Street and from my side of the desk I could look out and see the courthouse and Cadensview Bank. It was near Memorial Day and two men, presumably who worked for the town, were hanging American flags from the telephone poles outside. Patrick was also the member of one of the local community-building organizations, the Ecological Interest Group (EIG). He said of his work

> My non-profit work is based on how do you maintain rural character? It's the number one priority of everyone in the county. I mean you could take a survey across the entire county and I guarantee you that over 75% of the people would say that what's special about Cadensview is the land, it's where we live, we live on a mountain, we have pristine forests, beautiful valleys, and views on the edge of the mountain wherever you go and that's why they're here.
>
> Two is the culture of the place that has developed out the personality of the land, it's invited all these back-to-the-landers, counter-culture types, progressive- alternative types, and it also is that these people have a symbiotic relationship with the people who have lived here generationally. When you're isolated you have to work hard, you have to be an active participant in the land and the community in order to survive. That's our goal with this group, preserving that personality and character of the land is the number one priority of everyone! So how do you create jobs and have economic dynamism while preserving the rural character of the land, which is what everyone wants. I think the only way is putting the land to use, it's probably not the only way, but it seems like the most logical way, you put that land back into active use, you take the land and preserve it through making a living off of it through agriculture and revitalization.

Patrick articulated the goals of EIG. He, like other developers and CBO members, believed that he knew what was best for the community and what the other community members wanted. He also echoed similar romantic sentiments made by early back-to-the-landers in his thoughts regarding land and culture in

Cadensview and how the two are, in his mind, intrinsically linked. Real-estate advertisements, including from Patrick's company, are increasingly promoting Cadensview as a sustainable place with rural character and modern amenities.

George, one of the major leaders of revitalization in the town center who told me he had restored about twelve buildings, had a soft-spoken, but powerful way of speaking and like to draw expansive generalizations about the social world, ecology, and Cadensview. Listening to him was similar to hearing a sermon. He had been nearly impossible to pin down for an interview. George was on almost every committee in town and somehow connected to many of the community events I attended, including planning meetings. However, he does not like to give his cell phone number or email address out to people unless they know him and he kept re-directing me to his personal assistant when we would bump into one another. When we finally did meet, it was on the farm that he and his wife had recently purchased and he was pulling out of the driveway having forgotten that I was coming. Thankfully I flagged him down by jumping from my car, waving my arms frantically, and running down the gravel road after his truck. During the interview I had the feeling I was keeping him from going somewhere, but then I realized maybe this was just his energy, always on the go. He obliged by talking for over three hours and told me

Wendell Berry[29] has said if we lose respect and reverence for the natural world we're no longer going to be able to live in it. I believe that if you think about what that means and you think about the corporatization of the world and the domination of humanity over the natural world you come to conclude that we're not going to survive if we don't have more reverence, and more understanding, and aren't living more in harmony with that which is our place of residence. Our bones and our flesh have the same biology and the same chemistry as the Earth has. We're a part of this place. Our spirit is another question, but our body comes from here.

Cadensview and the people that live here have to be mindful of this place and taking care of this place. You need to understand that, our interactions here create an interaction with regional, national, global interests. So in that sense, I think it's all connected.

I think Cadensview is a small little village environment that offers people a higher degree of community than a lot of places, maybe most places. In that sense we're not so prone to government and to the forces of the corporations. We have community, we have a way of working with each other, we have a way of speaking to each other. We have interactions and relationships, which are more important.

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[29] Wendell Berry is a environmental activist, farmer, and author from Kentucky who has written and worked and published extensively on land stewardship. Berry's work was very popular among the newcomers I interviewed in Cadensview.

Although George identified with Berry's principles, he still relied on his links to the larger economic system. He saw Cadensview as a blank and ecologically devastated place to fix through "green" economic development and revitalization.

Interestingly George moved to Cadensview in the 1990s and brought with him the small high-end manufacturing business that he owned. The company hired over twenty full time employees; a success story in a community that had experienced major deindustrialization. However, he has since sold this business to an out of state firm and the current employees, from what I could tell based on a local newspaper article, are terrified because they have heard rumors that it will relocate and take their jobs. George did not want to talk about it. A local planner who worked for the town government told me "if businesses want to grow, really grow, they can't stay in Cadensview because we don't have the right kind of transportation to get products moving quickly. " She also said that Cadensview had lost two major industrial businesses in the past year and she was not privy to say more, but it was likely they would be losing another.

Another developer, Allen, outlined his vision for Cadensview for the next ten years by saying "I think the sustainability piece is the next piece. You've got to find a way to create the conditions where the land, and water, and the forests are going to be respected, are going to be thoughtfully cared for. For me that's the direction I'm trying to work toward." He went on to say

> Familiarity breeds contempt. In other words, a lot of locals don't appreciate what they have 'cause they're used to it. I think people see land as a commodity. That it's something that

> can be bought, and sold, and traded, and done with whatever the owner at the time wants. I have a different feeling than that. I don't think we own the land. Because we have our name on a deed in the courthouse doesn't mean that we are free to do whatever you want to do. There is a responsibility as a landowner. So I say, let's see if we can take a farm that was pretty badly corroded, and return it to something that's organic and more in its natural state and see if we can make a profit. Farming, that's the idea. The idea is that unless we can make farming profitable we are doomed to having all the best farmland sold off. This is what guides my work.

Based on visions of sustainability and land stewardship, narratives by CBO leaders and revitalization investors provide insight into the motivations behind development projects in Cadensview. Current projects in Cadensview involve a model farm to "show community members how to make $35,000-$40,000 off just three acres of land," creating a biking/walking trail, and environmental education by bringing in well known speakers to teach the community how to "be better stewards of the land." There is also the desire to expand niche and value added agricultural products and create more spaces for artists and crafters to sell their wares to promote more tourism.

Investment Partnerships in Cadensview

The rumor of several chain stores coming to Cadensview intensified feelings over how best to develop the community in the early 2000s. Citizens, predominantly newcomers, joined together in two main private investment

partnerships to raise capital to revitalize the town center and save it from potential franchises. The most prominent of the investment groups was called Collaboration for Cadensview (CFC). One of the very first goals of this group was to generate interest among citizens into buying a former abandoned warehouse and, according to Allen, business owner, self-described newcomer, and leader of the project, turning it into “shops that would really portray what this town is about.” The invitation to buy into this property was extended to only a few individuals who had the resources to invest. These individuals were disproportionately newcomers (all but one, who later backed out) and were also some of the most affluent members of the community in terms of wealth and income. Allen said that he started formulating ideas for new development in the late 1990s and had the thought “Wouldn't it be interesting to work on a project to turn a little small community in the Blue Ridge Mountains into a really cool place?” By the early 2000s he said

> I saw an opportunity. A building in central Cadensview had gone belly up and had grass growing up in the cracks of the parking lot. I just had this thought that and it was a recurring thought, that if this did go to a Walgreen’s or a McDonald's or a chain business that it would forever dominate the landscape of the town. It would dominate it. I started talking to the owners. I wrote an essay about how a group of people could come together, and pull their money, and purchase this land, this property. It could be a transformational event.

I asked him who was part of CFC investment group? He answered “It was just all my friends. People that were like me. We had people who were local on the original list who eventually dropped out. It was a core group of about twelve or fourteen families that all put up pretty significant piece of money. From there we bought the first building. We developed the whole thing.”

Joseph, who came as part of the early back-to-the-land movement, but was asked to be part of the CFC investor group by Allen said “Word was that if we didn’t buy a franchise was moving in. We put more than million dollars in to this one building to make it beautiful and look nice and ecologically sound, we wanted to preserve the quality of downtown and that’s really why we decided we could lose all the money.” He continued on, saying “We sit on the board of a number of non-profits trying to do good. We give generously to numerous organizations...It wasn’t my dream to be a developer, quite the opposite, but when this whole revitalization thing was getting off the ground my son said ‘it’s a good project, get involved.’” Others shared similar sentiments about their involvement.

George also told me that he had never intended to be a developer. He said “It was an art project for me...I just remember I used to walk down this road and it was the dumpiest. It was disgusting. I never thought my own work was ever trying to create economic structures, but...” He trailed off into a soliloquy about land management. George said that although he had revitalized twelve

buildings in Cadensview, he was most proud of having purchased the historic restaurant called the *Ice Cream Parlor* in the town center in the early 2000s.

The Ice Cream Parlor is a regionally known hub for musicians that hosts dances and live music on the weekends in addition to selling food and regional-themed goods. George believed that revitalizing the Ice Cream Parlor was a major boon to the local economy, especially as a tourist destination. The Ice Cream Parlor has had a total makeover like other buildings in the town it was a general store during the early part of the twentieth century and had all but shut down by the 1990s like many of the other businesses in Cadensview. Because it still attracted people on Friday and Saturday nights to hear music and dance it had managed to stay open despite “having empty shelves and one old rickety cooler serving ice cream” according to Erman, an old-timer resident. In 1998, two doctors from out of town purchased the restaurant with dreams of revitalizing it, although nothing much happened. The building was becoming more dilapidated when George and his wife decided to purchase it in the early 2000s. He told me

> I could see that the Ice Cream Parlor had the potential to make Cadensview an international destination. We were just beginning to think about a downtown revitalization project. This restaurant was seen by the state and by the people that were in the know as this is the place that has to be saved. At that time the people that owned it after seven or eight years of losing money were like, I'm done with this. It was two doctors from out of state and they had a place here in Cadensview. They rescued the store and they have to be given a lot of credit for doing that. They kept it from just falling apart. I

> bought it because I saw that there was a potential, but I also realized that this place is falling down, it needed to be saved.

George and his wife were meticulous in their revitalization seeking out experts on architecture and regional history. They re-opened the lunch counter, starting charging an admission fee, and filled the shelves with novelty items that fit the country-store theme. They also hired three part-time workers to run the cash register and serve food and ice cream. While the Ice Cream Parlor was George's personal project, the CFC completed similar revitalization projects on other buildings. I found that many of the newcomer-owned businesses hired other newcomers, and although most of the jobs only paid part-time, not everyone had access to them.

George went on to say that "Cadensview is certainly becoming a community that has gotten a lot of notoriety in the last 10 or 15 years that it didn't have before." He told me that part of this recognition was because of work done by folks like himself through private investment and their CBO work. I then asked him how he thinks people hear about Cadensview and places like the Ice Cream Parlor, which on any given Friday or Saturday night has people lined up back to back inside and spilling into the parking lot and onto Main Street. He replied

> I figured out a lot of how to do that [advertising], of how to get people in the state and national organizations, important people in the tourism industry involved in the arts and so forth to see Cadensview. It's a lot of behind the scenes work. For example the state tourism center spends $15,000,000 a year

> promoting the state and brings in troops of travel writers. We bring them here, we encourage them to come. We invite them to our restaurants, festivals, the famers' market and the Cadensview story grows. Once it's recognized, in this case, by the state tourism center and national entities then these entities and agencies start to promote it. When you pick up the newspaper, and see an article in USA Today, or you see - two months ago there was an article in the Smithsonian about the best places in America to visit this year--that's all been orchestrated....

He went on to say that "I think that the inevitable results [of revitalization] was that it became interesting to other people, and they wanted to come and see it, and experience it. Now people are moving here."

Although today the Ice Cream Parlor is a well-known tourist attraction, not everyone in the community likes the changes that have taken place. Other residents in the community told me that the Ice Cream Parlor "is full of crap from China" or "a great place for seeing music, but full of ticky-tacky tourist junk" and "a beautifully restored, upscale building that definitely attracts tourists, but is no use to my life or many people I know unless I want over-priced lavender soap or toys made in China for the grandkids." Or "the Ice Cream Parlor used to have lots of old-timers playing music and arguably it still does, but they might go up there on a Sunday afternoon and pick a round or two, but not on a Friday night or Saturday, you can't find parking for one thing and then navigating through all them people is a real pain, especially if you're old like me."

The Commons on Main and the Main Street Depot are two of the most recent revitalization projects led by CFC and also two of the largest buildings in the town center. The Commons on Main used to be a chain grocery store before going out of business in the late 1990s. Under the supervision of CFC and with their investment the building was completely restructured to LEED standards as a home for small businesses. The building also generates its own electricity through solar panels. It now has two real-estate offices, a doctor's office, and a yoga studio currently renting spaces (Figure 8). The Main Street Depot is similar, though it was designed specifically with art galleries in mind with big windows looking out on to Main Street in close proximity to the Ice Cream Parlor and the new Farmers' Market. The Farmers' Market is also a project implemented by the CFC that was created in 2010.

Another prominent investment group in Cadensview is the Protecting Space Initiative (PSI) a smaller, but equally prominent group. PSI focuses on purchasing land and developing new properties in addition to creating residential spaces rather than only revitalizing older buildings. A member of PSI said

> in 2009 the Protecting Space Initiative coalesced as a philanthropic organization because [we] decided we wanted to hold a meeting, it was like an environmental economic development think tank, let's get some people together and think of a way to get some messaging and learning around environmental stewardship while also trying to create more opportunity here [in Cadensview].

A member of the local government's very small (two member) planning department said "PSI members were key in getting the land downtown turned into a park with public park status. They have worked really hard at creating infrastructure and things in the park. The stage, the sidewalks, and the bathrooms." I spent a lot of time in this park during participant observation and I found by talking to people that it appeared to be heavily used by newcomers and tourists. I very seldom met or spoke to any old-timers or locals there.

The priority of private investing partnerships in Cadensview, like CFC and PSI has been to implement revitalization projects and sustainable development, defined by research participants as localizing the economy by developing stores where local products can be sold, creating up-scale, energy efficient buildings, and expanding tourism as Carol said "I like tourism because it's relatively clean, people come, they leave, and that is that." She emphasized that with the downturn in the economy people "still need to get away and day trips are what's possible today, not cruises, not trips to Europe." She also said that her craft business depends on tourism. Another outcome of these private investment groups has been the creation of non-profit community-building organizations designed to spur development projects in the community.

Figure 8

The Commons on Main, a revitalized building in Cadensview

Community-building Organizations

Collaboration for Cadensview (CFC) and Protecting Spaces Initiative (PSI) were each the catalysts for the creation of two influential and loosely linked non-profit community building organizations: Ecological Interest Group (EIG) and Citizens for Positive Change and (CFPC). Claudia, a member of the Ecological Interest Group said that her involvement in PSI made her realize

> Look, we need to get a community organizer. People said, 'What do you mean?' I said, 'We need to hire somebody. We have these things we believe in – sustainability, creative economy. If we want this to happen, we have to have somebody in the community working on this.' That was when we raised some money for a director, and we formed the board. It's been hard to sustain that organization [EIG]. By the way, financially, my husband and I and one other couple were the biggest donors.

The Ecological Interest Group, which has non-profit 501(3)(C) status, functions as a planning organization for developing ideas to protect the "feel of the community and stewardship of the ecology" and to promote tourism through a *creative economy*. In this instance creative economy means jobs that cater to or revolve around the arts and culture of the community including generating knowledge and consulting or what one many said, "creative economy is a part of the overall economy that is relative to the arts as we know them: music, craft, painting, literature. Also taking advantage of the ingenuity and entrepreneurial spirit of this community." Together members of EIG decided, after several rounds of meetings, that they should narrow the focus to agriculture,

education, and helping locally owned businesses. EIG member, thirty-four year old Kate who spent most of her adult life so far finishing two advanced degrees and travelling, said of her initiation into the CBO upon moving to Cadensview in the mid 2000s

> It was invitation only…a core group of about twelve to sixteen people I'd say who realized that we had a chance to fundamentally make some changes in the community, there were enough people and there was enough energy and there were enough opportunities in the organic agriculture and artisan community that we could conceivably start a little action group.

Josiah who grew up in Cadensview, the son of back-to-the-landers left to attend college and graduate school before he moved back. He is now chairperson of EIG. He described the logistics of keeping EIG going by saying

> Well, our bigger concern is can the organization sustain itself through community development? Can we be supported on a local level the same way a soup kitchen might be supported? Our work is under the radar work, at least right now, it's not seen as pulling people directly out of poverty for example, and in that way I think we've managed to be pretty appealing across some political divides because it's really about incentivizing and helping people learn to help themselves.
>
> We have one full time staff member and on part time and the unpaid board. We're trying to find a perfect division where one third of our funding comes from grants, one third comes from community support, that is, donation based, and one third of it comes through our existing social enterprise project

> like farm-to-table dinners. Right now we still rely heavily on donations.

EIG paid staff members' salaries from grant money from the state. However, EIG, like other CBOs in Cadensview was dependent on donations from community members to keep its projects going.

Tom, a local business owner who moved to the area to open a winery in 2000 said he joined Citizens for Positive Change (CFPC) to "protect our businesses, we've got a good thing going here. People come here to see a real village, a working village. We've got that." Others shared similar sentiments. Major investor in the town center, Henry, self-described "transplant to the region" and described how the CFPC formed

> about seven years ago when we were doing the downtown redevelopment projects—we [PSI] had a couple million dollars of community development block grant money—We were looking at development and we had a group of folks who were looking at the issues of the downtown area, and at that point—I mean, you're probably familiar with what it was like—it was really pretty dumpy. A lot of vacant buildings. A lot of buildings in disrepair, so we realized there is some work to be done from the private sector to try to do that, but we also needed improvements in other areas, so we had a couple of architects in our [private investment] group that had come to town, and they had a fair amount of experience with this whole thing. We developed a network. We had places people could meet and we filed for the nonprofit status and we had an attorney that we worked with to help us do that stuff, so we just got the team—we put some money into it.

> Everybody loves Cadensview and we all were trying to restore the history. You know, we want to try to bring things back to their original glory that was here in Cadensview at one point, it used to be a bustling, very viable local downtown community...

Henry's description of PSI shows the privilege that these groups have including access to and money to pay an attorney in addition to grant-writing knowledge.

There are over nineteen community-building organizations that have been established in Cadensview since 1980.[30] These CBOs can be categorized into five types: sustainability/environment, arts/culture/creative economy, historical preservation, poverty awareness, and mindfulness/wellness (Table 2).[31] I found that the most prominent and well-funded CBOs in Cadensview are focused on sustainability/environment and arts/culture/creative economy, were formed by newcomers, and are continuing the development work that private partnerships began in the early 2000s.

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[30] This number excludes religious organizations, well-established civic organizations, and private schools.

[31] Old-timers established the two historical preservation groups, but have some newcomer participation. The Thrifty Nifty thrift store was established in part with grant money from ACA, but is run primarily by volunteers from local church ministries. Members and creators of the other organizations are primarily newcomers.

Creating a Brand and Tourism

In 2010, members of the Ecological Interest Group (EIG) and private investors met together because they wanted to develop a brand for the town. They expressed to me that they had not been exactly sure what they wanted, but had several ideas including a slogan and stickers to put on locally made products. These individuals thought that name recognition would bring in more tourists to the town and promote local products to a broader audience therefore helping to boost the economy. They decided to propose their idea to the town and county government. I asked one of the members of EIG about the process, she said “We had a relatively small group of ten or fifteen people who went through a six-month process to develop a slogan and really get our ideas on paper. However, when we got down to closing on this project you had people come out of the woodwork and they wanted to change the direction of the plan.” After an article came out in the local paper about creating a brand for Cadensview many local citizens felt outraged and as though they had been excluded in the process. Others had concern that the branding would service newcomer business, while making others look bad. Finally, some expressed concern that this was turning Cadensview into a product, which was problematic. One man who supported creating a brand said, “the word branding is the blanket term for self promotion so marketing and branding are used willy-nilly, the true importance of what Cadensview needs to do is to create a place where the people who come here don’t treat us like zoo animals but admire what we do and

Table 2 Community-building Organizations in Cadensview, 1980-2010

Community-building Organizations in Cadensview 1980-2010					
	Historical Preservation	*Addressing Poverty*	*Healing Arts***	*Sustainability Environment*	*Arts, Culture, & Creative Economy*
1980-1989	History Lives Gallery & Museum*				Alliance for Community Action*
1990-1999	Society for Historical Preservation*				Catalpa Arts Center* Cadensview Cultural Association*
2000-2010		Harvest Now (food bank)* Thrifty Nifty (thrift store)*	Mindfulness Institute* Health, Wealth, Growth* Cadensview Mindfulness Program* Center for Innovation and Intention Cadensview Research Organization	Cadensview Land Trust Organizers* Ecological Interest Group* Citizens for County Change* Citizens for Positive Change* Conservation Happens Now Quilt Patch Farm Initiative*	Moonwork Gallery* Cadensview Falling Leaf Tour Organization

*Indicates 501 (C)(3) status

** Healing arts refers to groups interesting in non-Western medicine and health and spiritual practices like yoga, Tai chi, Qigong, acupuncture, among others.

are willing to pay a premium to take some of that home with them." The group who proposed creating a Cadensview brand worked with the local town planner. She told me "it was private entities that were interested in this. And I was on board. We tried to soft pedal it by calling it an emblem rather than a brand." Members of the group and the town planner were surprised at the backlash from the community over the idea of creating a brand. The group decided to postpone the project for a later time.[32]

Creating a brand or logo for Cadensview was just one idea of ways to draw in tourists. Another idea, this one also proposed and implemented by EIG, was to create a tourism advisory board in Cadensview that would serve in a planning capacity. The tourism advisory board is a town council appointed private sector board. The advisory board's five members are all newcomers to the community who own service industry businesses such as an art gallery, a winery, and restaurants. The tourism advisory board works with the tourism council that

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[32] Another project was attempted in the late 1990s by a group of individuals who identified as part of Cadensview's alternative community. They proposed that Cadensview should have its own form of currency. They created paper bills, called Cadensview Currency that could be exchanged around town for different products. A few stores and local individuals accepted the currency. However, the project failed quickly. One farmer, a back-to-the-lander said "everyone wanted food for this Cadensview Currency and what can I buy back for it, I don't see any mechanical services, I don't see anyone willing to come do farm work, all I see is like crystal earrings and special massages and all kinds of gi-gogs and dust-catchers, that's not what I need in exchange, so yeah capitalism takes care of that with the ever loving buck."

consists of a governing council, two board of supervisors members (county government), two town council members, and an appointed tourism director. The tourism commission is a partnership between the county and town, but its fiscal agent is through the Chamber of Commerce. The town collects transient lodging and meals tax monies, a standard practice in many communities. That money gets channeled to the tourism council to work on tourism projects, with the input of the advisory board. The new director of the tourism board, Deborah, who moved to the community in the 1980s, told me that

> In Cadensview because we don't have big commercial lodging facilities and because we're very, very rural we didn't have enough money to have a tourism office. So the local planning agent put in a request that the private sector put in a certain amount of money as well. Normally what you would do is create a tourism commission when it's county and town, several governmental entities, you'd have to create an authority or some entity. Our governments [county and town] didn't want to have to go through that so they forwarded this to the tourism council. They negotiated and made an agreement with the Chamber of Commerce to service fiscal agent. The Chamber keeps up with a certain amount of the budgeting and administrative, but they actually don’t have any legal authority.

Deborah went on to say that she hears all types of opinions on tourism including those in support and those who are vehemently against it. She said her job is to

develop a plan that is inclusive of everyone in the community, but that this is not always possible.

Henry, owner of a new lodging facility and member of PSI and CFPC explained to me that tourism in Cadensview is crucial for its economy. He had privately invested a lot of money into tourism development, a lot of volunteer hours, and was instrumental in leading the initiation of the tourism advisory board. He said

> I think Cadensview has found a formula that is unique, that's interesting, that works economically. The tourism industry does not create a lot of high paying jobs, but the people who are in the tourism industry in Cadensview can still live here. If you want to live in Jackson Hole, Wyoming and a lot of other really expensive tourism places you can't even live there. You have to live in the neighboring county. You can't afford to live there. That's not the case here. I think there's a good balance right now of having people be able to live and share part of the dream of this place, and share it with other people who bring money to it. I think it's right. It's rightly balanced.

Henry, like others, seemed out of touch with the living prices in Cadensview.

I found that Cadensview had been developed by the elite private sector and that this was not necessarily indicative of what community residents wanted. Deborah shared with me that some key leaders and movers and shakers within the private sector were not on good terms with key government officials. She said a result was that she often felt stuck in the middle “I can feel in the middle of those polarized positions that people play.” She said that she knew tourism could

not ultimately save Cadensview completely, but that given the changing economy building up tourism should be a major part of Cadensview's development plan.

Many newcomer investors and members of CBOs expressed frustration with the conservative local government. One man said of his work with EIG, " It's not as tied to local government as we would like, the county government has absolute no interest in the Ecological Interest Group and I would say that in general they are very suspicious of anything that we do." Another EIG member told me,

> it's really difficult to get anybody of a progressive attitude on to town government or city government and it's not necessarily the voters because they haven't been offered choices, it's a yucky job you know, it's fraught with a lot of hassle and it's not well paid and there have been so many uncontested races for the board of supervisors, I mean there is no choice, and the Tea Party has popped up loud and strong the last couple of years and has pushed forward a couple of candidates and they've been almost the only ones, I mean you know, fairly undefeated, I mean I actually got behind the campaign of a moderate republican, in fact I will say that I bulldozed him into running again because I was really concerned about his opponent and here's a could-give-a-shit less about politics hippie chic trying to help a republican cattle farmer maintain his position."

The leader of CFPC told me "We thought we could become a partner with local government. That was our hope. We could do things as a nonprofit that a government agency cannot do." I found that initially CBOs in Cadensview wanted

to create partnerships with local government. However, they realized quickly that this would be a challenge. Many local citizens, especially old-timers, tend to be socially conservative and vote for the Republic Party and were skeptical of development projects. Old-timer, Agnes, explained to me that when the Civilian Conservation Corps came through in the 1930s and 1940s to build a scenic road many local people's farmland was taken by eminent domain. She told me many people had never gotten over this incident.

Agriculture and Eco-Education

In addition to creating a tourism board, the community-building organizations in Cadensview have proposed a variety of ideas to stimulate interest among citizens and tourists in the agriculture, environment, and land stewardship. For example, CFPC wanted to combine agriculture and education. Henry, one of the leaders said "we've done a series of agricultural networking meetings that the county and economic development task force kind of sponsor and we bring together a bunch of people that are talking about the environmental activism and the activity that's going on in the farming community." Historically Cadensview has been and remains an agricultural community. Although most of the old-timer farms use conventional methods, today Cadensview has become regionally known for having organic farms, most of which are owned and operated by newcomers.

Allen, a self-described newcomer and CBO leader, was been so inspired by the organic farming trends in the county that ten years ago he decided he wanted to own an organic farm and purchased some land, bought equipment, and hired employees, a sizeable investment. He told me that he did not know much about agriculture when he started, but that he knew farming was a way to save Cadensview. He said

> there are many rural towns that are dying out because of losing their industry. We were one of them, but look what's happening. We are trying to figure out how to maintain rural vitality without having to industrialize. I bought this farm ten years ago. Right from the beginning, I knew I wanted to be a good land steward. I didn't know anything about agriculture. I knew some things about growing organic gardens, but I didn't know anything about agriculture.

He went on to add that his new farm gave him the idea to have an educational component to agriculture in Cadensview, as a board member he presented the idea to EIG. He said “there’s an approach to farming, to economics really that is quite different than somebody that wants to farm, and immediately wants to spend $100,000 on equipment, and a big dual-wheel pickup truck, and at the end of the year say I can't afford to do this. I think there's a way of farming in Cadensview County that can be done that's profitable, and you improve the land while you're doing it.” Allen wanted to teach people that farming could be profitable; although he admitted he had yet to make a profit in the five years he had been experimenting with faming.

According to its chairperson, EIG members decided that

> its footing should be on agriculture. So we're working primarily on agriculture right now. One of the big issues facing Cadensview right now is land use. If we're not careful, if we don't think through this and don't work for it [then] over the next 10, 30, 40 years all the best land that runs along the roads, which are usually in the valleys, those farms are going to be sold and subdivided into smaller and smaller pieces

EIG decided that one way to support agriculture was to sponsor a small model farm where they could teach the community how to make $35,000-$40,000 of an acre of land (Figure 9). Peter, the model farm manager, who moved to the community straight out of college after responding to an online advertisement told me that “so far the model hasn’t worked, we haven’t been able to do it, but I think it will eventually.” I asked if the model farm was based on a hypothetical situation—that is, to begin farming with free land (owned by an EIG member) and a guaranteed income $35,000 (which comes from EIG as well)—and therefore even if it does work might not be applicable to the average person’s life. Peter shrugged his shoulders and appeared to think carefully. We were eating breakfast at a local diner. He said he understood that the idea was not realistic because most people have to purchase land and equipment to be able to farm and the model farm already came with these things, but that

> this is just an educational component for EIG and the model farm was created to help inform the curriculum for the classes that EIG plans to offer in the community. The idea is to develop producers basically, that can produce on a small plot

> of land and everything that flows out of that is just education about why it's worth it, why it's worth it to farm sustainably, that it's a payoff, both on an environmental stewardship level and for your pocketbook. The biggest interest is that we're trying to model. It is a model, what they've done. I don't know how long it can survive...

The majority of individuals who worked (as non-owners) on organic farms in Cadensview were newcomers. Most were young, college-education, in a transitory life period, white, and from upper to middle class backgrounds. I asked some of the farmers, owners, and managers that I interviewed where they hired their workers from and all but one said they advertised nationally in on-line agencies aimed at people interested in organic farming, which people like Peter found and successfully applied to work in Cadensview. I met individuals from all over the country when I visited local farms like Natalie from California, Nate from Louisiana, and Martin from Wisconsin. I inquired about their pay and living conditions. I found that most of the farm work was seasonal, low-paying, and came with very primitive living spaces like a barn loft with an outhouse, a camper, or a rustic yurt. Many of these young farmers thought of this work as an adventure and a rejection of mainstream society. They also worked admirably for very long hours in harsh weather doing hard manual labor.[33]

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[33] Cadensview does have a small, but growing number of migrant Latino/a workers employed in agriculture, but I found that it seems most of these workers were on conventional, not organic farms. I could conjecture that this may be because of the small size of organic farms in Cadensview.

Figure 9

Lettuce boxes at an organic farm in Cadensview

Allen told me that he was critical of local farmers and conventional farming methods and that is why he had his farm manager look for employees through organizations that he knew “attracted people who really care about farming.” He believed that conventional farmers

> They've bought into having things. They've made choices that have put them in a place where they don't have resources. My farm could fold. This farm, my farm, has not shown a profit since I’ve owned it. It may not show a profit this year. I could get to a point where I would not be able to continue this, but I'm not going to have an expensive house, and a new four-wheel truck, and a lot of other things. That's not where my buying habits are.
>
> I guess what I'm saying is I think there's a new generation of farming that's appearing on the horizon [he names his farm manager and another employee, both of whom he hired from out of state because of their interest in organic farming] and some other people coming into Cadensview embodied the spirit of that. It has to do with really working hard. Not expecting high wages. Not buying into the consumer culture. Having enough, and living an interesting life.

Allen pays $7.50 per hour and provides a small RV camper for his farm assistants to live in and a communal kitchen and bathroom. He owns a large home nearby where he lives in addition to over 100 acres, three downtown buildings, and a large farmhouse where the farm manager lives. Allen pulled up to our interview in a muddy, but what appears to be brand new four-wheel drive truck. The barn and hoop houses on the farm were in immaculate condition and

there were two brand new tractors and a backhoe parked inside the shed. Allen has brokered wholesale deals with restaurants and organic grocery store chains outside of the community to sell produce. In addition to two full time farm employees who make hourly wages with no benefits he also hires seasonal workers. When I asked him at the end of the interview if there was anything that we had not covered that he would like to say he said “Well the first thing that needs to happen in Cadensview and the country is that farming needs to be valuable, I mean the median age of a farmer is fifty-eight or something in Cadensview right now and there is no inherent value.”

Another self-described entrepreneur, local businessman, and CBO member Henry said that “my dream is to buy as much of the land as possible and rent it to people who want to be stewards of the land, not developers.” After mentioning several properties he had bought during the last decade or so including an organic farm that he “played around with for fun,” he seemed well positioned to do this. He was also the owner of the three largest new development properties in the community.

Not all newcomer farmers in Cadensview are like Allen and Henry. Some of these newer farms, like Karen’s, are successful and not just a hobby. Karen has been farming for almost twenty-five years and works long hours. In 2000, she purchased a big van and began purchasing crops from her other farming neighbors to sell at a nearby farmers’ market. This community-supported agriculture (CSA) took off and now she collects and distributes vegetables, fruit,

and meat within a fifty-mile radius in addition to farming her own land. She said that her business is called a food hub and that her only goal is “getting good wholesome food to people.” She had realized early on that growing multiple crops on her farm was not going to generate income, but that combining resources she and her farming friends and neighbors could benefit. We met for the interview in the small trailer, the kind you might see at a construction site, on her farm. Outside were two large refrigerated storage sheds and a greenhouse. Karen laughed and told me

> you know, we don’t make a lot of money at this company, I mean if you noticed, what we don’t have is a big cherry CEO desk or you know a permanent facility to be out of, but we also pay the farmers outrageously well and I think most of them would agree that they won’t find better prices in the area for their products. I feel really good about the fact that we are directing a very large percentage of this back to the farming community.

She stopped frequently during our meeting to answer questions from various employees knocking on the door. At one point she stopped to accept a delivery of eggs and I helped unload them. Karen told me

> I think our big chore now, our big agenda as [organic] growers if we really want to spread this, we have to figure out how to get this more accessible to the public. There are several prongs of that the first of which we really struggle with and that’s price, uh, most of the growers we work with have many other choices and they do not need to be groveling on the farm for no money, I mean a lot of them even have significant

> degrees and have come back to the farm because that is what they would rather do, a lot of them are plain people who have amazing other skills and could go out and get a job in construction in a heartbeat for twice the price, if we don't help them want to stay in this economically they won't, so we ride the razor's edge of trying to keep this company solvent and trying to pay the growers well enough to keep on farming.

CBOs in the county looked at Karen's farm as a model of successful agricultural development. However, she made sure to qualify the success she has had by saying

> What farmer can really steward their land well when all they can think about is planting fencerow to fencerow to get the biggest gross they can because they are just the little guys to big corporations, big agribusiness? How they can get it into the market place for the best price possible that is not conducive to the better whole and so we end up with all these residual problems that the tax payer pays for where we have EPA superfund sites to clean up and extreme soil erosion and toxic waste site dumps all over the place and the whole nine yards and somebody is bearing those costs, that's not free, and the American consumer including farmers have been absolutely blind and been willingly led down the path by salesmen and marketing of multinational corporations to think that not's their problem, not their responsibility, nor any disadvantage to their life...

Individuals and organizations outside of the area, including multiple regional and state tourism advisers and public officials saw Cadensview as a model for what other communities can become. However, leader of the newly created economic development task force and only self-described old-timer member (born and raised in the area), Georgette, said

> I always feel badly when we get calls from other communities who want to visit and learn how we created this wonderful place, and it is a wonderful place, it has a lot going for it, but it's wrong for people to perceive that we have it all figured out because we certainly don't. I mean you've probably seen the documentation, the wages for the 3000 people or so who work in the town proper who don't commute out is among the very lowest in the whole state.

In South Central Appalachia efforts led by CBOs may seem collective and representative of the community. However, on closer inspection the push for sustainable development and tourism as a way to diversify the economy and preserve the authenticity of place is predominantly led by a small group of wealthy newcomers. Deborah said that as tourism director she also got questions from other communities over why Cadensview was so successful. She said that she had given it a lot of thought and determined that "what I realized is that there was an incredible amount of private money by a small number of people which are dedicated to revitalization here that others places don't necessarily have." These individuals have the time and capital necessary to pursue their desired

development agendas. Kate, member of EIG and local business and property owner, said

> My sense is that is that Cadensview has benefited from the private investment of a few individuals...spending their money on institutions and buildings that they wanted to see come out of disrepair and...really they're kind of just taking the place of what town or county government would do in some other places...
>
> I mean I would venture to say that the difference is that people who have seen opportunity elsewhere and have seen what responsible progressivism can bring are the people willing to spend their money on it [here] and that maybe doesn't have anything to do with being a *come here* versus *been here* but it will naturally incline toward the *come heres* because they came from somewhere else and they've seen other places and they have more worldliness, more experience...I don't know maybe they feel they have a responsibility to give back to the community for their success, maybe that has to do with it. I certainly feel that way.

Even more, the efforts to create an authentic community (however romanticized) based on sustainability and land stewardship have the potential to further stratify poorer residents because they are not included in development agendas.

Paradoxical themes emerged from interviews with CBO members, especially between affluent newcomers from the 1990s and 2000s like retirees and entrepreneurs and the older, back-to-the-landers. Mauve, a member of CFPC, and a self-described back-to-the-lander said "The irony is, you know, the people with money that are coming here and retiring are very financially

supportive because many of us who started with the ideas don't have the money to do it. So we are dependent on these retirees coming from all kinds of places and running these things or helping financially."

I found that there were mixed feelings about newcomers in Cadensview, but that there was general agreement that newcomers with money had generated many of the recent and major changes in Cadensview. Perhaps the town planner best summarized development in Cadensview by saying "it's a dynamic little community and we have a few private leaders who have done a lot for the community, but they also rightly or wrongly have a lot of people who feel that they are overpowering [and] I think it is probably a true concern about Cadensview becoming too slick as opposed to being kind of just the natural place that it is." Furthermore, I found that the majority of developers in Cadensview were well-intentioned; and yet, their agendas were shrouded in the belief that economic development was the only conceivable option.

Competing Narratives Over Development in Cadensview

Cadensview has changed drastically since the early 2000s and many of these changes, especially tourism development and revitalization efforts, can be attributed to affluent newcomers through private investment and CBO work. Some members of the community have accepted new development projects enthusiastically, others appear indifferent, however, not everyone is supportive. Many residents in Cadensview, old-timers and early back-to-the-landers alike, have concerns about revitalization and brought up a wide range of issues

including: worries that only a few people benefit from current development projects; that tourism is intrinsically not sustainable; that revitalization of the town center masks poverty in the community; and that Cadensview's charm has been replaced by a caricature of itself.

Clyde who has lived in the community his whole life and commutes over an hour to work in a manufacturing facility in addition to working three part time jobs said "It does feel like a different place. I like to remember it like it used to be, like I said I ain't never even been in any of those stores that's in there now. I don't have any interest in going in any of them." Another man and self-described old-timer, Howard, said jokingly that he has "started to tell people that this is where Deliverance was filmed. I'm kidding, but really I don't want people to know how beautiful it is here." Another long-term resident, thirty-two year old Cara, who has worked several jobs including waiting tables, house-cleaning, and in childcare said

> Yeah, I mean it's not even that their businesses do so well, it's that they started out with so much money, so they came in with money, it's not like their businesses are thriving and it changed the whole atmosphere because there was so many jobs coming here, it wasn't that. It's that they came in with money, they made what they wanted to make, and they made it what they wanted to be.

These residents saw the effects of deindustrialization and the related growth of the service industry as highly problematic. Furthermore, they did not believe that tourism offers a viable alternative or much-needed jobs.

Lorraine, retired teacher and old-timer in Cadensview shared her thoughts on development in Cadensview. She said

> I mean the whole new atmosphere in town does offer an opportunity for individuals to grow their businesses like the artist thing, but a lot of that really is people who have relocated here. I can't tell you it's better than minimum wage jobs. It's not jobs that pay as far as being able to raise a family. That's why people still leave the county for work.
>
> I think the town is being turned in to some sort of living museum and it doesn't actually sell too many things to local people who need it. I think [the craft stores and galleries] probably appeal to people who come for the music and stuff, but I don't want to say its history or our history, it's just merchandising. And that's fine, just don't pretend it's something it is not. People here were doing things before those galleries and they'll keep doing it after.
>
> And see what cracks me up even more is to hear from some people who have moved here say that they don't want anyone else to move here.

Like Lorriane, Tim grew up in a small community in Cadensview County. I met him for our interview in the rambling farmhouse that he grew up in, and that his mother, and his grandmother had grown up in. His sister lived across the street and his brother was down the road. He taught school in a neighboring

county. We sat in their big dining room drinking lemonade. Tim had married a newcomer; his wife was from Idaho. Tim was involved with one of the historical preservation organizations. He told me that he had a lot of thoughts about the changes in Cadensview and that he and his wife discussed them frequently. He said

> People say ‘oh how quaint...these people are museum pieces, let's come and enjoy them.’ At the same time when decisions are made by non-profits or environmental groups [he paused to remind me that he is democratic and very pro-environment and actually against the conservative county government] they discount the people as being not sufficiently sophisticated or to really know what's good for them.
>
> Can I say that people are looting the county? I don’t know. I think most of the county is sort of narrow-minded and that change is inevitable. The impact is probably minimal in the long run, it’s probably the least invasive of these disruptive kind of change—I mean the changes are based on having people enjoy the county and the heritage tourism and arts and ecology and stuff so I guess it's good in comparison to coal mining or extractive industry, it just doesn’t feel that good
>
> I see these groups wanting to overstep and being frustrated with county government. See county government is reactionary. So I think there are people who are frustrated and say that it is backwards and apply that to everyone, so there's a paradox, folks [newcomers] saying ‘oh this county is wonderful and it's preserved and beautiful, but also that these people can’t take care of themselves and they don’t know what’s best for them.’

> I don’t necessarily agree with the government after every election here by any means and the group in there now is tea-party conservative types, but I do know that this county is the way it is because the people who have lived here for generations took care of it just fine.
>
> Now...it is the privatization of the government...I mean groups that act outside of the government, but still do governing, still making plans and changing things around and yet they’re saying government is crucial to the community. I think that it's really interesting because you have this very progressive group of new folks who aren't interested in local government but they say they support local government.

Michaela who had spent her whole life living in Cadensview and was the mother to a teenage daughter told me it was tough to find work in Cadensview that could support them. We were sitting in the small living room of the rental home she lived in. The house was immaculately tidy, but the carpets and linoleum were well worn and she apologized for not having air conditioning (which I did not mind at all). She had spent her whole life in Cadensview and pieced together jobs to provide for herself and her daughter. She had worked at a garment industry right after high school and in her early twenties, but since that closed she did not feel she had too many options. She drove a school bus, baby-sat, cleaned houses, and helped out her elderly parents. She told me about what she observed in Cadensview

> What you see now are really moneyed interests starting their own little companies and starting multiple little businesses and kind of taking over the town. It’s not just people with a passion

> or whatever, it's people with money creating a passion for other people. Your seeing big money families coming and I said this to my dad and he said 'don't complain about it' because he remembers back when a lot of the shops were closed down and he says it's a lot better than that time. I still think it makes it really hard when money comes into the area and there are no jobs for people who have grown up here, who want to stay here. They're getting pushed out of their hometown.

Michaela was not bitter about the changes in Cadensview. She said things had not been great when there were factories either, that the managers were overbearing and that there was no social mobility. She seemed resigned to idea that the power structures were consistent, but that the people were interchangeable.

Travis, another person who grew up in Cadensview told me that he really liked the ideas that newcomers brought to the community because "it seems like they really know how to make money." He told me that he had grown up on a farm and now works construction, but thanks to some connections he made he has gotten a real estate license and opened up a recreation tourist company leading hiking trips. He told me that his family

> at first I guess they thought maybe it was a little radical, I mean with my hiking business. But one thing for me pushing it was seeing my father's bad health and it all just stems from working, working hard, hurting his back and stuff, I didn't want to always be in construction, lifting heavy beams, destroying my life. I thought this would be easier, easier on my body, but

> I didn't have much experience, I'm trying not just to better me, but to better the family. I think some of these people moving in really have the right idea.

Unlike the others that I interviewed, neither Travis nor Michaela were overly critical of the newcomers moving in to Cadensview, but they both recognized that they had changed the community through development. Their narratives also describe the different levels of socioeconomic class in Cadensview.

Paul grew up in Cadensview, but left for college at eighteen. He decided to move home when he saw how Cadensview was changing. We met in his home, it was a cold January day and he carefully added wood to the woodstove to keep out the chill in the old farmhouse he rented. He told me that his return had left a bitter taste in his mouth because he realized that he really did not have much say in development. He said he had tried to join a CBO, in fact on paper he was still a member, but that at meetings he felt excluded so he stopped going. He said he had spent all his savings investing in a restaurant that was his idea with a newcomer he met who said he would be willing to put in more money for more say in the design. Paul agreed, but his friend went through a divorce and they go bought out by another group of investors. Now he works as a waiter in the restaurant his once owned. He told me

> Cadensview is a perfect back-to-the-landers paradise because they can go back to the land but still go out on a Friday night and see a band. [And] I think that any of the people that belong to this alternative aspect of Cadensview are the ones who will extol the virtues of Cadensview left and

> right, loudly and proud. They're getting articles written about their businesses are bringing people to here, etcetera, etcetera. They're great ambassadors, I know that, but if they went to a football game on Friday night they would probably not know a soul. None of them. But then again, that's why I'm here. I've moved away and I came back because of how the community has changed.

Not only did some old-timers feel resistant to the changes they saw being implemented by wealthy newcomers, so did some newcomers. Shelly an organic farm owner and resident since the early 1990s said

> If there could be coal mining here there would be, so I guess tourism is better than nothing, but it's very fragile. I mean I've seen it. I sell to the wineries, for a while it was high cotton, but when gas prices go crazy, you won't see a blessed car for twenty miles. It's fragile, what people don't get here is that it's a boom and bust cycle and is that what we want to base our economy on? I mean here looks cheap, but it only looks cheap to certain people coming down here. The storefronts are gorgeous and ever so alluring for tourists to come in and buy stuff, especially high dollar arts and crafts. They're not terribly practical and many locals don't really buy them. What fills the downtown now is really no more use to my life than a boarded up store.

Other resident said they felt that the town had two parts, one for the tourists and one for locals. Bridgette said that the changes in Cadensview were complex and sometimes paradoxical. She told me that

> [Development here] it's gentrification of the country culture, the rural culture of cleaning it up and making it digestible and accessible to outsiders and new people. Most of what is in the Ice Cream Parlor for example is manufactured rather than handmade kind of things, manufactured and playing to the idea of the rural lifestyle, more than anything else.
>
> ...I also see that people—especially the newer folks in Cadensview—have this idea that we are a democratic, hippie, alternative town, because that's most of what they see in the downtown without recognizing that what is it—something like 67% works outside the county and that's mostly the local population and the old timey population, aside from maybe the farmers and people who work at the Exxon or whatever, you know, the diner.
>
> That element of gentrification of downtown Cadensview is ignored. There is this alternative perspective—really promoting the artist side of things, the environmental side of things so that's what people coming to Cadensview or people new here assume is what Cadensview is.

Bridgette said she really loved many of the changes in Cadensview like having an upscale bar and nice music venues. She also said she loved the farmers' market and the vibrancy of the town, but that it was important to call it what it was and "not pretend we're something we're not."

Carl, who moved to Cadensview as a back-to-the-lander in the 1970s said he was really dismayed by the changes he saw. He told me that when he came to Cadensview he really had a vision that it would be somewhere different from other places and a place where he and the other back-to-the-landers could truly

live democratically or “to at least figure out what that means.” However, he said he was a little appalled at how things had turned out. He cited one of the new luxury lodging facilities in Cadensview that marketed itself as a place to reconnect with the land and learn how to farm on weekend get-a-way. He said

> The eco-village thing, I call it the *ego*-village. I mean it should be from the bottom up, but it’s from the top down because that’s whose got the money. I mean, geez, I never say anything like this, although the ego-village that’s a pretty common phrase around here, it’s just not real and the patterns that result from that bullshit are non-sustainable patterns, it’s like you can’t prime the pump like that, that’s just not the way it’s done, I mean really.

He went on to tell me that some of the organic farmers who put their whole lives into their farms like Karen have “done more for the economics of this community” than any of the developers in the town.

When I asked Karen, in another interview, about people moving to Cadensview, she laughed when I mentioned that she had “come down here” too, moving in from the northeast to start a farm. She said she knew there was a great irony in what she was saying, but that

> the storefronts are gorgeous in town they’re ever so alluring for consumers to come in and buy crap and gizmos and all that, but all those high dollar arts and crafts are generally not terribly practical, generally Cadensview people don’t buy them, and does the world need more of them?...what has filled Main Street now and the downtown intersection is of no more use to my lifestyle than a boarded up store was. You

> want to bring tour buses through here, well what about I need to get to the grocery store and now it is so clogged with traffic and people just strolling around gawking at things that I can't get to the supermarket. What about sustainability? **....**And the signs, the sings, as you're exiting Cadensview say thank you for visiting, I want to tear them down and put up another little sign that says thank you for living here. (Figure 10)

Karen brought up a common concern and something that I had noticed first hand. Although Cadensview is a small town with only two traffic lights, it was impossible to drive through it on the weekends. Getting from one side of town to the other by car was difficult because of tourists lining the streets. Another participant said "I've learned all the back roads about how to get around it so that I don't have to deal with the traffic hassles downtown."

In South Central Appalachia, some communities are attempting to diversify their economies through regional tourism development and sustainable, but there has been very little discussion regarding on the role that rural gentrification plays in putting these destinations on the map. Affluent newcomers who move to the area have the time and capital to push their agendas on to the community. Henry, newcomer, development leader, and proponent of tourism perhaps captured this spirit best when he said "The way I see it with climate change happening at the rate it's going, this mountain will be oceanfront property."

Figure 10

Sign on the side of the highway as you leave Cadensview

Following an in-migration of back-to-the-landers, gentrifiers today seek a particular rural lifestyle and a community that feels “real” and “authentic.” Based on their class position in the larger global economy these wealthy newcomers are positioned to implement their development projects through the injection of private capital into public seeming projects like the work done by emerging CBOs hoping to stimulate tourism and other development. On one hand, these development projects offer grassroots solutions to the problem of failing local economies. On the other, they reinforce existing class structures and push a very narrowly perceived development process all in the name of sustainable development. Moreover, long-term residents face an increasingly insecure job market because of deindustrialization and the mechanization of agriculture. Financial strain is exacerbated by increases in property taxes, land and home prices, and rent because of the arrival of affluent newcomers who play a role in driving up prices.

I found that rural communities in South Central Appalachia that are lauded as success stories of the regional tourism boom and development tend to have experienced influx of more affluent individuals into the area. Glorifying tourism without taking into account rural gentrification can mask important social challenges in rural communities. I also found that discourses of sustainability drive participation in community planning and development projects, which is another important piece of the phenomenon of environmental gentrification. To be sure, the purpose here is not to dismiss efforts to create a more healthy

economy or to protect the local ecology; these are very important goals. Rather, we must critically examine the efforts that are being made and how they may be limited in scope because of the ever-pervasive nature of the market into our everyday lives. If, therefore, we try to conceptualize American society within this society, while proceeding without operationalizing or defining the concepts that we are using, then we are bound to replicate/reproduce the very thing that we are seeking to critically grasp. The end goal of this endeavor, then, is attempting to get a handle on how American society functions, and more explicitly, how environmental gentrification occurs, ideologically.

Practicing a truly reflexive discipline is impossible if we operate with a set of basic assumptions about our society that we are not willing to critically evaluate. In this regard, sociology is permanently in danger to mimic what is happening in (what we regard as) society. Evaluating the assumptions that we take into our own empirical work, as well as the assumptions that guide the theoretical foundations upon which we build our work (those observations of observations), is an important first step toward a more reflexive discipline.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In this study I used ethnographic methods to interpret the lived experiences and observations of individuals living in a gentrifying rural community in South Central Appalachia. I oriented this work theoretically within environmental sociology and also within the Frankfurt School tradition of critical theory. Current literature on environmental gentrification looks at this process in urban areas and finds that developers cater to individuals concerned with the environment by creating green spaces and marketing environmental amenities in order to make a profit. One outcome of this process is the displacement of lower income households. Gentrification is connected to production level processes like economic restructuring, which creates uneven development and the possibility of cyclical revitalization projects. Gentrification is also related to consumption as individuals (depending on their wealth and status) can choose to live in a particular place based on lifestyle desires and interpretations of place. In rural areas, gentrification tends to happen similarly. Changing economic patterns create employment and population shifts, which can generate economically blighted areas and thus lead to newcomers migrating in to rural communities with profit-minded goals of developing these depressed areas or consuming green spaces (often with the added incentive of cheap land). Consumption patterns can also lead newcomers to rural areas as they seek out places that fulfill their

pastoral dreams. Lines between production and consumption patterns of gentrification are blurry and tend to be connected.

In this study I found that early back-to-the-lander activists migrated to rural Appalachia seeking cheap land and the desire to get back their metaphorical roots, since many had grown up in urban or suburban areas. As neo-pioneers these back-to-the-landers homesteaded, but to earn money often left the community to sell their wares (like pottery, handmade clothing, photography, musical instruments, etc.) in established arts and crafts markets in urban areas. A result of this was that social networks formed among back-to-the-landers resulting in a close-knit community. Many of these early newcomers were also proponents of environmentalism. By advertising in counter-culture magazines and through word of mouth they attracted more like-minded individuals to the community. Their activist roots led them to implement small, but successful development projects in the community.

By the 1990s, more and more people were moving to the case site for this study, Cadensview. As affluent people (retirees, remote workers, and self-described entrepreneurs) began to arrive, the community changed drastically in a short amount of time. Like the early back-to-the-landers, these newcomers moved to the region in pursuit of idealized visions of living, working, and farming in a rural space. They sought an authentic experience and revered perceived notions of long term residents' "ways of living." Rural spaces have long provided such fodder for pastoral dreams of returning to the land. Affluent newcomers

developed investment partnerships and non-profit community-building organizations to effect change through development initiatives like revitalizing buildings, advertising to tourists, creating a park, providing start-up money for small businesses, among other projects. These projects revolved primarily around the loosely conceived idea of developing an ecologically and economically sustainable community. However, old-timer and other community members often received these efforts as being paternalistic and argued that the result was rising housing and land costs, which combined with the effects of deindustrialization was making living in this community more and more difficult. Furthermore, despite recognition from state and regional agencies applauding development in Cadensview, life for most residents has not necessarily changed for the better. Poverty rates and median income remain very similar to nearby communities that lack downtown revitalization and tourism. Long-term residents continue to be very concerned about rising living costs and lack of good-paying jobs.

Because Cadensview is considered to be a model of successful development in the region, the impact of environmental gentrification needs to be considered by policy makers. Capitalism depends on economic growth and must constantly expand geographically and in terms of total production in order to be maintained. In a capitalist economy, environmental costs are externalized to the public who are paying for the costs of pollution and limited access: land, water, air, and other species are expected to absorb capitalists' toxic mess, and the

natural world is something to provide resources and absorb waste. Yet, capitalism is inherently not sustainable. Moreover, in modern society there is the belief that environmental problems can be solved with technological fixes or, in other words, humans believe in the inevitability and legitimacy of scientific progress. Modern society depends on the domination of nature, and landscapes (and non-human nature) are constantly altered by humans as a way to accumulate more and more capital. One result of the domination of nature so far has been the creation of ecological crises such as climate change, loss of biodiversity, mass extinction, and streams of toxicity, as environmental sociologists, particularly in the Marxist tradition, have been pointing out. Furthermore, not all people (nor non-humans) have equitable access to basic necessities and environmental amenities. In cases of environmental gentrification, some groups have more environmental privilege than others.

Capitalism also depends on the internalization of its underlying logic by humans to be perpetuated. Humans must see this system as the standard against which to judge the world around them. Although environmental sociology and the current work being done in the political economy of the environment highlight the economic processes that create and perpetuate environmental gentrification through the capitalist mode of production, these theories are limited in their ability to capture the type of ideology engendered by the capitalist mode of production and related processes of mediation, such as alienation (or reification, as perceived of by Lukács; or instrumental reason, as conceived of by

the Frankfurt School), which are being reproduced in everyday life. Thus, one could argue that environmental sociology does not have the tools necessary to adequately critique the phenomenon (late capitalism; globalization, neoliberalism) that it seeks to assess.

The early Frankfurt School critical theorists, along with Postone and Habermas, have provided a basis for gauging how ideology operates and how human domination over non-human nature is being reproduced on to other humans. Furthermore, this mode of domination is being normalized and internalized as second-nature, especially through positivist science, the legitimation of rational thinking, and the capitalist system, and thus turning into an ever more sophisticated form of ideology. Therefore, the steadfast belief in positivist science to tackle even the most extreme challenges, like the environmental crises that we face today, impedes our ability to conceptualize alternatives to this way of thinking. Instead, we tend to rely on the very structures that created and perpetuate further the crises that we face in addition to the ideology that maintains them. Over time, as our alienation (and the reification of this process) becomes more and more integral to who we are, we become less and less able to see how this process unfolds in our everyday lives, since this logic of capital is embedded in our psychological makeup. The main purpose of this study then, was to examine the ways in which individuals internalize and rationalize this ideology in their lived experiences, through a case study of environmental gentrification blending together ethnographic work and critical

theory. By examining the personal narratives of gentrifiers who were enacting their visions of creating a sustainable community, I sought to capture the ways in which their development projects, while well–intended, produced latent consequences such as raising property values and rent, and exacerbating environmental privilege. In addition, I found that even ideas supposed to be conducive to creating a sustainable community were at their core melded to the very ideology that is rooted in the intrinsically un-sustainable system of late capitalism.

Based on the findings in this study, one question remains: what are we to do, as sociologists? I have attempted to define the ideological frameworks of gentrifiers and old-timers in a rural community rather than focus on the "correctness" of the arguments. In this way I have applied critical theory, not only as a theoretical orientation, but also as a methodological tool. This is where I believe we can make a sociological leap. The task at hand is to distinguish between the "reality" according to the various claims made by newcomers and old-timers, and what is to be found "behind" this reality—to whatever degree we may be able to perceive it. When we operationalize, or seek to define, abstract concepts (e.g., environmental gentrification) and are able to engage in empirical research (e.g., ethnography), doing so has the potential to get us closer to accessing how ideology operates in the everyday world today. In other words, in this particular case, how the environmental gentrification process functions in a rural Appalachian community (or whatever other unit of analysis is relevant) can

be engaged with in a multi-level, multi-faceted research practice, if we try to persistently and critically examine validity claims put forth during the research process. In the final analysis, the more insidious ideology becomes, the more our identities (even as social scientists) become wrapped up in it.

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Appendix

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. How long have you lived in this area?
2. What drew you to this area? (Or how long has your family been in the area? What drew them to the area?)
3. What does living here mean to you?
4. What do you do for a living?
5. What organizations or businesses do you feel are most important to the community? Why?
6. How does your role as _____ influence the community?
7. What does creative economy mean to you?
8. What changes have occurred here while you have lived here? Do you think these are positive or negative changes?
9. What do you think about the direction of development in the county? What about in the town?
10. Are there any people who you would consider to be the “movers and shakers” of development here? Why?
11. Do you agree with how the town and the county are run?
12. Can you describe what you want Cadensview to be like in ten years?
13. What are some of the most important things to you in this community? What would you like to see continue and grow and what would you like to see stop or change?
14. How would you define economic growth? How would you define sustainability? Do you think the two are compatible?
15. How is Cadensview related to larger, global economic processes?
16. Do you think there are any groups or individuals who have too much control in the town or county? Are there any groups who have been left out of decision-making processes?
17. What are your thoughts on capitalism?
18. Are there any other issues that haven’t come up so far that you think are important to address?
19. Do you own your home or rent?
20. Do you own any businesses or rental properties?
21. If you own land, how much land?
22. Do you own a second home or live part of the year in another place?
23. How often do you travel outside the county? The state? The country?
24. What is your level of education?
25. How would you describe your socioeconomic class? (How would you define it in comparison to others in the community? Are you better off, worse off, etc.)
26. What gender do you identify as?
27. What race or ethnic group do you most identify with?
28. Your age?

Vita

Rhiannon A. Leebrick is a doctoral candidate in the department of sociology at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville. She has a master's of arts degree from Virginia Tech in public and international affairs and a bachelor's degree in international studies from Hollins University.